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THE CONQUERORS: CULEBRA CUT *by Jonas Lie.* American literature has its full share of mighty dreams, necessary preludes to mighty deeds. In his painting Jonas Lie has caught the dream dearest to American hearts—the dream that leads through daring and endeavor to great achievement.

# *Adventures*

## IN AMERICAN LITERATURE

THIRD EDITION

REWEY BELLE INGLIS

FORMERLY UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL  
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## Preface

There has been much talk and countertalk about objectives for the high school course in American literature. But through all of the verbal storm, three purposes remain unshaken: (1) to improve the student's capacity to comprehend and enjoy the printed page; (2) to provide the kind of information and vicarious experience which will enrich his personality; and (3) to broaden his understanding of how present-day American ideas and ideals have developed through the years. The new 1941 revision of *Adventures in American Literature* recognizes and promotes these three objectives.

This Third Edition is a part of a four-book series for the senior high school, the other volumes being *Adventures in Reading: Second Edition*, *Adventures in Appreciation: Second Edition*, *Adventures in English Literature: Third Edition* and *Adventures in Modern Literature*. The present volume differs from its predecessors in three important respects:

(1) *It offers a 400-page section showing the relationship of American literature to the life from which it sprang.* Thus Part Two, the last 400 pages, traces, with a continuous narrative and appropriate selections, the growth of American ideas and ideals. The student sees that literature is really an expression of human experience; he acquires a better understanding of his country and a deeper appreciation of its institutions; he gets a new viewpoint on his problems and responsibilities as a future citizen.

Here in Part Two are literary classics like Samuel L. Clemens's *Life on the Mississippi*, Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast*, and Rölvaag's *Giants in the Earth*; leaders like Washington, Jefferson, Lee, and Lincoln, the last presented full length in a chapter from Sandburg's *The War Years*; picturesque figures of the western expansion like John Colter and Jedediah Smith; the old South in the books of Lyle Saxon; new scientific advances in the achievements of Dr. Carver of Tuskegee Institute and the sketch of "The Man with a Tractor." There are serious discussions of modern problems, like Lippmann's "The Paradox of Poverty and Plenty," John Erskine's "Invent Your Own Career," and a final challenge for the future in a radio address to youth by the Kansas sage, William Allen White.

All the way through this section of 400 pages, the various selec-

tions are linked together with a running narrative — a narrative which traces the development of American culture and institutions.

(2) *It contains 64 selections not found in the previous edition.* Some replace older selections and others represent additions. The short story section has been enlarged from fifteen to seventeen stories, with such important writers as Nobel prize winners Pearl Buck and Sinclair Lewis and such distinctively American figures as John Steinbeck and Jesse Stuart among the new authors represented. New essay selections bring to the young reader a chapter from Clarence Day's phenomenally popular *Life with Father* and such varied writers as J. Frank Dobie, E. B. White, and Anne Lindbergh. The additions in biography introduce a great patriot, a great artist, and a busy country doctor to bring greater strength and interest to the section. Three new poets who have recently won assured positions are added, Robinson Jeffers, James Weldon Johnson, and Archibald MacLeish; and a generous selection is included from Sandburg's recent *The People, Yes*, in addition to minor changes among the works of other poets already represented.

The readings in drama have been completely overhauled to permit the inclusion of Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer prize play *Our Town*, one of the most notable plays of the past decade, interesting for its innovations in dramatic technique, for its tremendous popular appeal, and for its embodiment of wholesome ideals and lovable characters. With this play are included Eugene O'Neill's one-act drama *Where the Cross Is Made* and the radio play *Textiles* by Sherwood Anderson, representing the newest expansion of the field of drama.

In making the new selections the editors have been mindful of the need for balance between the best works of the past and the most interesting works of the present, and also of the need to provide reading of varying difficulty so that neither progress in reading skill nor pleasure in rapid reading need be sacrificed.

(3) *New study aids have been added.* For example, at the end of Part One (the first 800 pages in which the selections are arranged by types) there is a review project labeled "A Backward Glance." This project is based on centers of interest modeled after those in the National Council of English Teachers' *Experience Curriculum*. In reviewing these selections from the standpoint of interest centers, the student is led to think of them and to interpret them in terms of his own life and his own thought.

New also is a series of "guides" for the more difficult literary types. They provide a brief discussion — always from the student's

standpoint — of the distinctive characteristics and standards of excellence of the particular literary type. It is the opinion of the editors that these guides should be read thoughtfully and not studied exhaustively before the reading selections. Then, after the student has read the selections, the guides may be studied in greater detail.

Many suggestions for outside reading and special reports are incorporated in the new section of study suggestions labelled *For Ambitious Students*. There the teacher will also find thought questions and composition subjects for the exceptional student to pursue according to his own bent and his own abilities.

Another new feature is the vocabulary-building program. At the end of many of the selections appear study sections under the heading *For Your Vocabulary*. In these sections the editors have chosen for treatment some 200 words from the selections which, on the basis of their judgment and teaching experience, (1) may present a problem of difficulty to students or (2) will enrich their vocabularies. The editors have set as a lower limit for their words those commonly known to students below the tenth grade as listed in the *Combined Word List*.<sup>1</sup> The upper limit was set by excluding from the vocabulary studies any words beyond the 20,000 most frequently used words in the language. Only in some few cases have the editors, on the basis of classroom experience, decided to treat a word which does not fall within these limits.

Using this refined list, a program for increasing the student's power over words has been established. This is not an artificial listing of words whose definitions a student must memorize in isolation from their context. A word's meaning is invariably determined by its total setting. The words in these exercises are discussed not only in relation to other words but also with reference to experiences which are meaningful to high school students. Insofar as possible, each word study unit is handled as a problem in thinking, and words are treated as ideas, not as stimuli for rote memorization.

Some of the foregoing basic changes were demanded by the new plan for Part Two — the plan for integrating the selections with the development of American life and culture. But no features of the older editions which have proved invaluable in the classroom were sacrificed. The popular selections in the old sections on "Folk Lore" and "Humor" were redistributed in the new organization, where they afford pleasant variety. The older section "The Growth of the

<sup>1</sup> A *Combined Word List* by B. R. Buckingham and Edward W. Dolch, Ginn and Co., 1936.

American Spirit " has been interwoven with the history of American literature, and most of the readings are retained with the new narrative.

The editors wish to point special emphasis to the value of the type organization of the selections in Part One, the first 800 pages. The literary types represented, the teaching aids provided, and the general tone and viewpoint of this section are similar to those of the older editions. And it is right that this should be so. After all, over a period of ten years, the older books have gone through a rigorous classroom test in thousands of classrooms. Changes have been made only when recommended by classroom teachers who have actually used the older books with all kinds of students and groups. Hence, in Part One the student, as before, continues to meet the great personalities of American literature and becomes acquainted with a wide variety of their best writings. Likewise the type organization is retained because it fosters the steady growth of the student's critical and perspective faculties.

In accordance with the purpose of the book, the completely new illustrations have been selected to present other American arts and American ways of life, and to go a step further with the aim of integrating literary experience with American life in general. For additional visual aid, the literary history is accompanied by a new set of time-charts, making clear at a glance the chronological relationships of authors' lives and of important events in the development of the country.

In pursuing the plan which seemed to them to offer the finest opportunity for rich experience in American literature, the editors have not forgotten the many experienced teachers who have developed highly effective methods based on other organizations of the course. With the literary history in Part Two are included lists of readings in Part One, so that the teacher who achieves best results with the chronological organization can base his work on the history, with frequent excursions into the readings listed at the end of each section. For the teacher who prefers to organize his course around centers of interest, the review project "A Backward Glance" serves to group the selections from the types division into sections for original study, and the readings in Part Two constitute a splendid unit on the growth of the American spirit.

So we give you *Adventures in American Literature: Third Edition!*  
May it prove a stepping stone to richer enjoyment of life in America!

THE EDITORS

## CONTENTS

ix

### *Book Reviews*

|                               |  |     |
|-------------------------------|--|-----|
| CLIFTON FADIMAN               | Review of " <i>Drums Along the Mohawk</i> " by Walter D. Edmonds | 358 |
| TIME MAGAZINE                 | Review of " <i>Benjamin Franklin</i> " by Carl Van Doren         | 360 |
| WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE           | Review of " <i>My America</i> " by Louis Adamic                  | 362 |
| FOR FURTHER READING OF ESSAYS |  | 364 |

### BIOGRAPHY

|  |                                   |     |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----|
| INTRODUCTION TO THE READING OF BIOGRAPHY |                                   | 367 |
| M. R. WERNER                             | <i>Barnum's American Museum</i>   | 372 |
| MARQUIS JAMES                            | <i>Sam Houston at San Jacinto</i> | 384 |
| THOMAS NELSON PAGE                       | <i>Lee in Defeat</i>              | 398 |
| MARK TWAIN                               | <i>Boyhood</i>                    | 403 |
| HAMLIN GARLAND                           | <i>School Life</i>                | 411 |
| LINCOLN STEFFENS                         | <i>I Become a Reporter</i>        | 419 |
| MALVINA HOFFMAN                          | <i>The Hall of Man</i>            | 429 |
| DR. ARTHUR E. HERTZLER                   | <i>Country Practice</i>           | 439 |
| FOR FURTHER READING OF BIOGRAPHY         |                                   | 451 |

### POETRY

|                              |  |     |
|------------------------------|--|-----|
| POETRY IN AMERICA            |  | 457 |
| GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF POETRY |  | 463 |

### *Northern Poets*

|                       |   |  |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT | <i>Thanatopsis</i><br><i>To a Waterfowl</i><br><i>The Battlefeld</i>  | 467<br>469<br>471                      |
| RALPH WALDO EMERSON   | <i>The Concord Hymn</i><br><i>The Rhodora</i><br><i>Compensation</i><br><i>Forbearance</i><br><i>Voluntaries III</i><br><i>Each and All</i> | 474<br>475<br>475<br>476<br>476<br>477 |



*The Novel*

|                         |     |
|-------------------------|-----|
| GUIDE TO THE NOVEL      | 246 |
| NOVELS FOR HOME READING | 247 |

## THE ESSAY

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| INTRODUCTION TO THE READING OF ESSAYS | 251 |
|---------------------------------------|-----|

*Two Modern Familiar Essays*

|                    |   |     |
|--------------------|---|-----|
| ROBERT C. BENCHLEY | <i>Sporting Life in America: Dozing</i> | 255 |
| CLARENCE DAY       | <i>Father and His Hard-Rocking Ship</i> | 261 |

*Development of the Essay*

|                       |   |     |
|-----------------------|---|-----|
| WASHINGTON IRVING     | <i>The Author's Account of Himself</i>            | 267 |
|                       | <i>The Voyage</i>                                 | 269 |
| RALPH WALDO EMERSON   | <i>Gifts</i>                                      | 276 |
|                       | <i>Selections from Other Emerson Essays</i>       | 280 |
| HENRY DAVID THOREAU   | <i>Brute Neighbors</i>                            | 286 |
| OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES | <i>On Conversation</i>                            | 294 |
| WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE   | <i>Mary White</i>                                 | 299 |
| WILLIAM BEEBE         | <i>Almost Island</i>                              | 304 |
| J. FRANK DOBIE        | <i>The Heraldry of the Range</i>                  | 313 |
| CHRISTOPHER MORLEY    | <i>The Century</i>                                | 323 |
| PAUL DE KRUIF         | <i>Walter Reed</i>                                | 328 |
| E. B. WHITE           | <i>How to Tell a Major Poet from a Minor Poet</i> | 344 |
| ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH | <i>"If We Take Off at Night . . ."</i>            | 349 |

*The Magazine in America*

|                |                            |     |
|----------------|----------------------------|-----|
| HENRY S. CANBY | <i>Magazines Are Human</i> | 354 |
|----------------|----------------------------|-----|

# CONTENTS

ix

## Book Reviews

|                               |  |     |
|-------------------------------|--|-----|
| CLIFTON FADIMAN               | <i>Review of "Drums Along the Mohawk" by Walter D. Edmonds</i> | 358 |
| TIME MAGAZINE                 | <i>Review of "Benjamin Franklin" by Carl Van Doren</i>         | 360 |
| WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE           | <i>Review of "My America" by Louis Adamic</i>                  | 362 |
| FOR FURTHER READING OF ESSAYS |  | 364 |

## BIOGRAPHY

|  |                                   |     |
|--|-----------------------------------|-----|
| INTRODUCTION TO THE READING OF BIOGRAPHY |                                   | 367 |
| M. R. WERNER                             | <i>Barnum's American Museum</i>   | 372 |
| MARQUIS JAMES                            | <i>Sam Houston at San Jacinto</i> | 384 |
| THOMAS NELSON PAGE                       | <i>Lee in Defeat</i>              | 398 |
| MARK TWAIN                               | <i>Boyhood</i>                    | 403 |
| HAMLIN GARLAND                           | <i>School Life</i>                | 411 |
| LINCOLN STEFFENS                         | <i>I Become a Reporter</i>        | 419 |
| MALVINA HOFFMAN                          | <i>The Hall of Man</i>            | 429 |
| DR. ARTHUR E. HERTZLER                   | <i>Country Practice</i>           | 439 |
| FOR FURTHER READING OF BIOGRAPHY         |                                   | 451 |

## POETRY

|                              |  |     |
|------------------------------|--|-----|
| POETRY IN AMERICA            |  | 457 |
| GUIDE TO THE STUDY OF POETRY |  | 463 |

## Northern Poets

|                       |                         |     |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----|
| WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT | <i>Thanatopsis</i>      | 467 |
|                       | <i>To a Waterfowl</i>   | 469 |
|                       | <i>The Battlefield</i>  | 471 |
| RALPH WALDO EMERSON   | <i>The Concord Hymn</i> | 474 |
|                       | <i>The Rhodora</i>      | 475 |
|                       | <i>Compensation</i>     | 475 |
|                       | <i>Forbearance</i>      | 476 |
|                       | <i>Voluntaries III</i>  | 476 |
|                       | <i>Each and All</i>     | 477 |

|                               |   |     |
|-------------------------------|---|-----|
| JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER       | <i>Proem</i>                                | 480 |
|                               | <i>Ichabod</i>                              | 481 |
|                               | <i>Skipper Ireson's Ride</i>                | 483 |
|                               | <i>Abraham Davenport</i>                    | 486 |
|                               | <i>The Eternal Goodness</i>                 | 488 |
| HENRY WADSWORTH<br>LONGFELLOW | <i>Hymn to the Night</i>                    | 493 |
|                               | <i>The Arsenal at Springfield</i>           | 494 |
|                               | <i>In the Churchyard at Tarry-<br/>town</i> | 496 |
|                               | <i>My Lost Youth</i>                        | 496 |
|                               | <i>The Discoverer of the North<br/>Cape</i> | 499 |
|                               | <i>The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls</i>       | 503 |
|                               | <i>The Bells of San Blas</i>                | 503 |
| OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES         | <i>Old Ironsides</i>                        | 507 |
|                               | <i>My Aunt</i>                              | 508 |
|                               | <i>The Last Leaf</i>                        | 510 |
|                               | <i>The Boys</i>                             | 511 |
|                               | <i>The Height of the Ridiculous</i>         | 513 |
|                               | <i>The Chambered Nautilus</i>               | 514 |
| JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL          | <i>The Courtin'</i>                         | 517 |
|                               | <i>A Fable for Critics (Selections)</i>     | 519 |
|                               | <i>The Vision of Sir Launfal</i>            | 524 |

### *Three Original Geniuses*

|                 |                                    |     |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|-----|
| EDGAR ALLAN POE | <i>To Helen</i>                    | 537 |
|                 | <i>The Bells</i>                   | 537 |
|                 | <i>The Raven</i>                   | 540 |
|                 | <i>Ulalume</i>                     | 544 |
|                 | <i>Annabel Lee</i>                 | 547 |
|                 | <i>El Dorado</i>                   | 548 |
| WALT WHITMAN    | <i>I Hear America Singing</i>      | 553 |
|                 | <i>Mannabatta</i>                  | 553 |
|                 | <i>Song of Myself (Selections)</i> | 554 |
|                 | <i>Beat! Beat! Drums!</i>          | 561 |
|                 | <i>The Carol of Death</i>          | 562 |

# CONTENTS

xi

|                                   |  |     |
|-----------------------------------|--|-----|
| WALT WHITMAN ( <i>continued</i> ) | <i>Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun</i>                 | 563 |
|                                   | <i>A Noiseless Patient Spider</i>                      | 566 |
|                                   | <i>When I Heard the Learn'd As-</i><br><i>tronomer</i> | 566 |
|                                   | <i>Miracles</i>  | 567 |
|                                   | <i>Darest Thou Now O Soul</i>                          | 568 |
| EMILY DICKINSON                   | <i>I'm Nobody</i>                                      | 569 |
|                                   | <i>A Word</i>  | 570 |
|                                   | <i>To Make a Prairie</i>                               | 570 |
|                                   | <i>An Altered Look about the Hills</i>                 | 570 |
|                                   | <i>How Happy Is the Little Stone</i>                   | 571 |
|                                   | <i>Some Keep the Sabbath</i>                           | 571 |
|                                   | <i>I Never Saw a Moor</i>                              | 571 |
|                                   | <i>The Soul Selects Her Own So-</i><br><i>ciet</i>     | 572 |
|                                   | <i>My Life Closed Twice</i>                            | 572 |
|                                   | <i>We Never Know How High</i>                          | 573 |

## Southern Poets

|                     |   |     |
|---------------------|---|-----|
| HENRY TIMROD        | <i>Charleston</i>                                       | 574 |
|                     | <i>Ode</i>  | 576 |
| PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE | <i>The Mockingbird</i>                                  | 577 |
|                     | <i>Aspects of the Pines</i>                             | 578 |
|                     | <i>A Little While I Fain Would</i><br><i>Linger Yet</i> | 579 |
| SIDNEY LANIER       | <i>Song of the Chattahoochee</i>                        | 581 |
|                     | <i>Barnacles</i>  | 583 |
|                     | <i>Tampa Robins</i>                                     | 584 |
|                     | <i>Evening Song</i>                                     | 584 |
|                     | <i>A Ballad of Trees and the Master</i>                 | 585 |
|                     | <i>The Stirrup Cup</i>                                  | 585 |

## Transition Poets

|                     |                          |     |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-----|
| EDWARD ROWLAND SILL | <i>The Fool's Prayer</i> | 587 |
|                     | <i>Opportunity</i>       | 589 |
| JOAQUIN MILLER      | <i>Columbus</i>          | 590 |
|                     | <i>Westward Ho!</i>      | 591 |

|                      |  |     |
|----------------------|--|-----|
| JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY | <i>When the Frost Is on the Pun-</i><br><i>kin</i> | 593 |
|                      | <i>My Fiddle</i>                                   | 594 |
| EUGENE FIELD         | <i>Little Boy Blue</i>                             | 596 |
|                      | <i>The Limitations of Youth</i>                    | 597 |
| BLISS CARMAN         | <i>A Vagabond Song</i>                             | 599 |
|                      | <i>Green Fire</i>                                  | 599 |
| RICHARD HOVEY        | <i>The Sea Gypsy</i>                               | 601 |
|                      | <i>A Stein Song</i>                                | 601 |

### *Twentieth-Century Poets*

|                          |   |     |
|--------------------------|---|-----|
| EDWIN MARKHAM            | <i>The Man with the Hoe</i>                           | 604 |
|                          | <i>Quatrains</i>                                      | 606 |
|                          | <i>Lincoln, the Man of the People</i>                 | 607 |
| EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON | <i>Miniver Cheevy</i>                                 | 610 |
|                          | <i>Richard Cory</i>                                   | 611 |
|                          | <i>Bewick Finzer</i>                                  | 611 |
|                          | <i>The House on the Hill</i>                          | 612 |
| AMY LOWELL               | <i>A Lady</i>   | 615 |
|                          | <i>Music</i>  | 616 |
|                          | <i>Patterns</i>                                       | 616 |
| ROBERT FROST             | <i>The Pasture</i>                                    | 621 |
|                          | <i>Birches</i>  | 622 |
|                          | <i>Stopping by Woods on a Snowy</i><br><i>Evening</i> | 623 |
|                          | <i>Mending Wall</i>                                   | 624 |
|                          | <i>The Birthplace</i>                                 | 625 |
|                          | <i>A Minor Bird</i>                                   | 626 |
|                          | <i>The Death of the Hired Man</i>                     | 626 |
| EDGAR LEE MASTERS        | <i>Anne Rutledge</i>                                  | 634 |
|                          | <i>John Horace Burleson</i>                           | 634 |
|                          | <i>Mrs. George Reece</i>                              | 635 |
|                          | <i>George Gray</i>                                    | 635 |
|                          | <i>Lucinda Matlock</i>                                | 635 |
|                          | <i>Silence</i>  | 636 |

# CONTENTS

xiii

|                         |                                       |     |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----|
| CARL SANDBURG           | <i>Chicago</i>                        | 640 |
|                         | <i>Buttons</i>                        | 641 |
|                         | <i>Grass</i>                          | 641 |
|                         | <i>A Fence</i>                        | 642 |
|                         | <i>Clean Curtains</i>                 | 642 |
|                         | <i>Wind Song</i>                      | 643 |
|                         | <i>Night Stuff</i>                    | 644 |
|                         | <i>Prayers of Steel</i>               | 644 |
|                         | <i>The People, Yes (Selections)</i>   | 644 |
| VACHEL LINDSAY          | <i>Abraham Lincoln Walks at Mid-</i>  |     |
|                         | <i>night</i>                          | 650 |
|                         | <i>On the Building of Springfield</i> | 651 |
|                         | <i>General William Booth Enters</i>   |     |
|                         | <i>into Heaven</i>                    | 654 |
|                         | <i>The Santa Fe Trail</i>             | 656 |
| JAMES WELDON JOHNSON    | <i>The Creation</i>                   | 663 |
| SARA TEASDALE           | <i>The Coin</i>                       | 666 |
|                         | <i>The Lamp</i>                       | 666 |
|                         | <i>Night Song at Amalfi</i>           | 666 |
|                         | <i>The Long Hill</i>                  | 667 |
|                         | <i>Leaves</i>                         | 667 |
|                         | <i>Barter</i>                         | 668 |
| ELINOR WYLIE            | <i>Escape</i>                         | 669 |
|                         | <i>Sea Lullaby</i>                    | 670 |
|                         | <i>Nonsense Rhyme</i>                 | 670 |
|                         | <i>Velvet Shoes</i>                   | 671 |
|                         | <i>Pretty Words</i>                   | 672 |
| EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY | <i>Lament</i>                         | 673 |
|                         | <i>The Spring and the Fall</i>        | 674 |
|                         | <i>Dirge without Music</i>            | 674 |
|                         | <i>Autumn Daybreak</i>                | 675 |
|                         | <i>If Still Your Orchards Bear</i>    | 676 |
| LOUIS UNTERMAYER        | <i>To a Telegraph Pole</i>            | 678 |
|                         | <i>Long Feud</i>                      | 678 |
|                         | <i>Prayer</i>                         | 679 |
| STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT   | <i>Mary Lou Wingate (from John</i>    |     |
|                         | <i>Brown's Body)</i>                  | 680 |
|                         | <i>The Mountain Whippoorwill</i>      | 683 |

|                               |  |     |
|-------------------------------|--|-----|
| ROBINSON JEFFERS              | <i>Joy</i>   | 688 |
|                               | <i>The Pulse Seine</i>                               | 689 |
| ARCHIBALD MACLEISH            | <i>Nocturne</i>                                      | 691 |
|                               | <i>It Is a Strange Thing — To Be<br/>an American</i> | 692 |
| FOR FURTHER READING OF POETRY |  | 693 |

### *Light Verse*

|                                    |   |     |
|------------------------------------|---|-----|
| BRET HARTE                         | <i>Plain Language from Truthful<br/>James</i> | 695 |
| HENRY CUYLER BUNNER                | <i>Candor</i>                                 | 697 |
| CAROLYN WELLS                      | <i>Diversions of the Re-echo Club</i>         | 699 |
| ARTHUR GUITERMAN                   | <i>How the Feud Started</i>                   | 701 |
| DON MARQUIS                        | <i>freddy the rat perishes</i>                | 703 |
| FRANKLIN P. ADAMS                  | <i>Those Two Boys</i>                         | 705 |
| DOROTHY PARKER                     | <i>One Perfect Rose</i>                       | 706 |
|                                    | <i>Folk Tune</i>                              | 707 |
| OGDEN NASH                         | <i>Unanswered by Request</i>                  | 707 |
| FOR FURTHER READING OF LIGHT VERSE |   | 709 |
| TYPES OF POETRY                    |   | 710 |
| METRICAL TERMS                     |   | 711 |
| FIGURES OF SPEECH                  |   | 713 |

### DRAMA

|                                   |                                |     |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|
| A SHORT HISTORY OF AMERICAN DRAMA |                                | 715 |
| A GUIDE TO DRAMA                  |                                | 723 |
| EUGENE O'NEILL                    | <i>Where the Cross Is Made</i> | 729 |
| THORNTON WILDER                   | <i>Our Town</i>                | 748 |
| SHERWOOD ANDERSON                 | <i>Textiles (A Radio Play)</i> | 805 |
| FOR FURTHER READING OF PLAYS      |                                | 821 |
| <i>A Backward Glance</i>          |                                | 825 |

## THE GROWTH OF THE AMERICAN SPIRIT

### *Chapter I. A Few Words about Adventures*

|                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------|-----|
| I. WHAT ARE ADVENTURES IN LITERATURE? | 833 |
|---------------------------------------|-----|

|                                    |     |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 2. THE BACKGROUND OF THE ADVENTURE | 835 |
| 3. OUR TIMETABLE                   | 839 |

## *Chapter II. Colonial Life and Literature (1607-1775)*

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. FIRST RECORDS              | 844   |
| DISCUSSION                    | 844   |
| CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH            | <i>The Original Pocahontas Story</i> 845  |
| WILLIAM BRADFORD              | <i>Scouting for a Landing in New England</i> 847                                    |
| 2. THE PURITAN IN NEW ENGLAND | 850   |
| DISCUSSION                    | 850   |
| THE BAY PSALM BOOK            | <i>First Psalm</i> 854  |
| THE NEW ENGLAND PRIMER        | <i>Alphabet</i> 855   |
| JONATHAN EDWARDS              | <i>Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God</i> 856                                     |
| 3. JOURNALS AND DIARIES       | 860   |
| DISCUSSION                    | 860   |
| SAMUEL SEWALL                 | <i>Selections from his Diary</i> 862  |
| SARAH KEMBLE KNIGHT           | <i>Selections from her Journal</i> 865  |
| COLONEL WILLIAM BYRD          | <i>Selections from A History of the Dividing Line</i> 871                           |
| 4. THE AGE OF COMMON SENSE    | 876   |
| DISCUSSION                    | 876   |
| BENJAMIN FRANKLIN             | <i>Project of Arriving at Moral Perfection</i> (from his <i>Autobiography</i> ) 879 |
|                               | <i>Sayings of Poor Richard</i> 888  |

## *Chapter III. A New Nation (1775-1800)*

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| DISCUSSION        | 891  |
| JEAN DE CRÈVECŒUR | <i>What Is an American?</i> 900  |
| PATRICK HENRY     | <i>Speech in the Virginia Convention</i> 905   |
| THOMAS PAINE      | <i>Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs</i> (from <i>Common Sense</i> ) 909 |



|                    |  |     |
|--------------------|--|-----|
| THOMAS JEFFERSON   | <i>The Declaration of Independence</i>               | 914 |
| FRANCIS HOPKINSON  | <i>The Battle of the Kegs</i>                        | 917 |
| ALEXANDER HAMILTON | <i>Speech in Defense of the Constitution</i>         | 920 |
| GEORGE WASHINGTON  | <i>Selections from Washington's Farewell Address</i> | 923 |
| THOMAS JEFFERSON   | <i>An Appraisal of Washington</i>                    | 927 |

#### *Chapter IV. American Literary Independence and Romanticism (1800-1870)*

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| GENERAL INTRODUCTION                              | 930 |
| 1. IRVING AND COOPER                              | 936 |
| 2. BRYANT AND WHITTIER                            | 939 |
| 3. EMERSON AND THOREAU                            | 941 |
| 4. HAWTHORNE AND MELVILLE                         | 946 |
| 5. LONGFELLOW, HOLMES, LOWELL, AND THE HISTORIANS | 948 |
| 6. POE, WHITMAN, EMILY DICKINSON                  | 954 |
| 7. SIMMS, TIMROD, HAYNE, LANIER                   | 960 |
| IN THIS VOLUME                                    | 964 |

#### *Chapter V. The Advancing Frontier (1800-1860)*

|                         |  |      |
|-------------------------|--|------|
| DISCUSSION              |  | 966  |
| STANLEY VESTAL          | <i>John Colter's Race for Life</i><br>(from <i>Mountain Men</i> )      | 972  |
| FRANCIS PARKMAN         | <i>The Ogillallah Village</i> (from<br><i>The Oregon Trail</i> )       | 980  |
| INDIAN FOLK LITERATURE  | <i>Song of the Horse</i>   | 989  |
|                         | <i>The Sharpened Leg</i>   | 989  |
| LYLE SAXON              | <i>Fabulous New Orleans</i>  | 991  |
| MAURICE S. SULLIVAN     | <i>Jedediah Smith Explores the Far<br/>West</i>                        | 999  |
| SAMUEL L. CLEMENS       | <i>A Lightning Pilot</i> (from <i>Life<br/>on the Mississippi</i> )    | 1011 |
| RICHARD HENRY DANA, JR. | <i>From the Forecastle</i> (from<br><i>Two Years Before the Mast</i> ) | 1017 |
| ARTEMUS WARD            | <i>A Business Letter</i>   | 1023 |

## Chapter VI. *The Test of the Union (1860-1865)*

|                       |   |      |
|-----------------------|---|------|
| DISCUSSION            |   | 1026 |
| NEGRO SPIRITUAL       | <i>Let My People Go!</i>  | 1033 |
| NEGRO SPIRITUAL       | <i>Nobody Knows de Trouble I See</i>  | 1035 |
| WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT | <i>Abolition Riots</i>  | 1036 |
| ABRAHAM LINCOLN       | <i>Farewell at Springfield</i>  | 1039 |
|                       | <i>Letter to General Joseph Hooker</i>  | 1040 |
|                       | <i>Second Inaugural Address,</i><br><i>March 4, 1865</i>                                      | 1041 |
| CARL SANDBURG         | <i>Lincoln Speaks at Gettysburg</i><br><i>(from Abraham Lincoln: The</i><br><i>War Years)</i> | 1043 |
| ROBERT E. LEE         | <i>Farewell to the Army of North-</i><br><i>ern Virginia</i>                                  | 1058 |
| ABRAM J. RYAN         | <i>The Conquered Banner</i>   | 1059 |
| HENRY WOODFIN GRADY   | <i>The New South</i>  | 1061 |

## Chapter VII. *Growth and Change (1860-1914)*

|                         |   |      |
|-------------------------|---|------|
| DISCUSSION              |   | 1070 |
| 1. THE LATE FRONTIER    |   | 1071 |
| ARTHUR VERNON           | <i>The Pony Express</i>                                       | 1073 |
| COWBOY SONG             | <i>The Cowboy's Dream</i>                                     | 1084 |
| PIONEER BALLAD          | <i>The Little Old Sod Shanty</i>                              | 1086 |
| OLE E. RØLVAAG          | <i>Prairie Doom (from Giants in</i><br><i>the Earth)</i>      | 1088 |
| JAMES STEVENS           | <i>An American Hercules</i>                                   | 1098 |
| 2. THE RISE OF INDUSTRY |   | 1106 |
| LAFCADIO HEARN          | <i>The Roar of a Great City</i>                               | 1111 |
| MARY ANTIN              | <i>First Impressions of the Promised</i><br><i>Land</i>       | 1113 |
| THOMAS AUGUSTINE DALY   | <i>Two 'Mericana Men</i>                                      | 1118 |
| FRANK NORRIS            | <i>All the Traffic Will Bear (from</i><br><i>The Octopus)</i> | 1120 |
| FINLEY PETER DUNNE      | <i>Mr. Dooley on Machinery</i>                                | 1130 |

### *Chapter VIII. The Rise of Realism (1870-1914)*

|  |      |
|--|------|
| GENERAL INTRODUCTION                     | 1135 |
| 1. HOWELLS AND JAMES                     | 1139 |
| 2. SAMUEL L. CLEMENS (MARK TWAIN)        | 1142 |
| 3. BRET HARTE AND THE LOCAL COLORISTS    | 1144 |
| 4. POETRY'S WESTWARD HO!                 | 1145 |
| 5. EASTERN WRITERS EMPHASIZING TECHNIQUE | 1146 |
| 6. THE REVOLT OF THE YOUNGER REALISTS    | 1147 |
| 7. THE LAST STAND OF THE ROMANTICISTS    | 1150 |
| IN THIS VOLUME                           | 1151 |

### *Chapter IX. World War and Modern Problems (1914 to the present)*

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 1. WORLD WAR AND DEPRESSION | 1153  |
| 2. MODERN PROBLEMS          | 1156  |
| ALAN SEEGER                 | <i>I Have a Rendezvous with Death</i> 1159        |
| WOODROW WILSON              | <i>A League for Peace</i> 1160                    |
| LOUIS ADAMIC                | <i>The Doorbell Rang: 1932</i> 1165               |
| WALTER LIPPMANN             | <i>The Paradox of Poverty and<br/>Plenty</i> 1169 |
| LYLE SAXON                  | <i>Crevasse</i> 1173                              |
| MORROW MAYO                 | <i>The Man with a Tractor</i> 1183                |
| JAMES SAXON CHILDERS        | <i>A Boy Who Was Traded for a<br/>Horse</i> 1189  |
| JOHN ERSKINE                | <i>Invent Your Own Career</i> 1194                |
| WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE         | <i>A Talk with Youth</i> 1198                     |

### *Chapter X. Contemporary American Literature (1914 to the present)*

|  |      |
|--|------|
| 1. LANDMARKS OF THE AGE                              | 1204 |
| 2. FOLLOWING UP EARLIER CURRENTS                     | 1205 |
| 3. NEW CURRENTS IN THE WIDENING STREAM OF LITERATURE | 1209 |
| IN THIS VOLUME                                       | 1214 |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS                                      | 1217 |
| DICTIONARY OF WORDS, NAMES, AND PHRASES              | 1223 |
| INDEX  | 1245 |



## THE AMERICAN TOUR

WHAT LIES around the next curve? What new lands spread out beyond the next hill? What rises into view when the misty ocean horizon at last is broken by the line of a new shore? That wonder has always lured men on to break through the mists of the unknown until the world now holds few unexplored corners. None of us can sail into a mysterious sea beyond which an undreamed-of continent awaits our landing, as Columbus did. We cannot ever live the high adventure of struggling for a foothold on a new continent, as the first settlers in Virginia and New England lived that adventure. No vast uncharted prairies stretch beyond the mountains we know to tempt a new Daniel Boone away from the certainty and safety of home. No mysterious rivers flow down to us from unknown hills beyond the horizon, murmuring a challenge to trace them to their source.

But even as you realize that you can never live such adventures as they were first lived, you have at your finger tips a kind of magic which can take you back through all those adventures, and also into the tremendous adventures of a modern world more complex and wonderful than any ever dreamed of by Columbus and Daniel Boone. Old trails may be lost in the dust of time, but the book trails lead everywhere — all over the face of the earth and back into the dim past along all the trails men have ever traveled. You may not have now the time or the money for travel; but just the same you can start out today on a tour that will take you wherever you wish to go, even to places where the swiftest modern train or ship or airplane could never take you. For books can carry you across time as well as space, skim back down the years as easily as they span the miles. Books can

even take you to adventures that have no time and no place — the great adventures of the human mind and heart and spirit.

A lifetime is too short to permit a complete tour of the tremendous world that books open to us. Let's see America first!

Before reading a book called *Adventures in American Literature* and embarking on such a strange tour of the United States, it is sensible to find an answer to the riddle of how one can travel and still remain at home. Have you ever noticed at a football game that the people in the bleachers lunge forward with their shoulders when the fullback hits the line? At the back of their minds they are playing football; they have placed themselves in the shoes of the fullback, and vicariously they are having many of the experiences that he is having. It is the same with reading. The reader becomes one with the characters. Their sorrow, terror, joy, or defiance lives again in his mind because of a queer trick of the human mind which melts the reader into the being of the characters. So it is that through another's eyes you may see the snow-covered mountains of Alaska though you never move an inch from your armchair; you may think great thoughts with Abraham Lincoln though his brain is now dust; or you may feel the defiance of Patrick Henry though he died a hundred years before you were born. This book, then, is your ticket for a tour of America which should be nearly as real as a trip on a Pullman train and at the same time is as physically impossible as was Alice's trip through the looking glass.

In your community there is probably someone who is commonly referred to as a great traveler. "He has been around; you couldn't lose him anywhere," you hear people say. He seems to be on speaking terms with Boston, New Orleans, and the Rockies. He is full of tales and experiences which make him a welcome companion. But your imaginary experiences may become almost as vivid to you as the memory of actual experiences is to the much-traveled person. You, too, may have mental pictures of the tossing waves of the Atlantic, the rolling prairies of Nebraska, the trim villages of New England, the towering skyscrapers of New York. American literature, like the magic carpet of the Arabian tale, can transport you to any of these places with a speed which shames the railroad train and even the airplane. Remember that just "going places" will not make you a great traveler. Probably you have talked to people who have visited faraway places, and who remember only that they stopped at such and such a hotel or left by such and such a station. Like their baggage, all they have gained by the trip is a paper sticker which

proves that they have traveled. The traveler who is a delight to his friends lives his experiences so fully that they become a part of him.

Now a great traveler must also be a good traveler. That is, he must be what is commonly termed a "good sport," not complaining if the bed is a bit hard or the cooking not just to his taste. Neither must he be lazy and lie sleeping in the hotel rather than go to the top of the Washington Monument for the view. Especially if he travels with a party must he be a person who is easy to get along with, who submerges some of his personal preferences for the better interests of the group. So you, about to launch out on this tour with the rest of your class, have an opportunity to show that you are a "good sport" and will not whine if an occasional essay is hard or a poem not just to your taste. You will not be too lazy to climb the heights of Washington's "Farewell Address" for a lofty view of our country. Such temporary difficulties are found only occasionally among the many opportunities for satisfying entertainment.

Another characteristic of the good traveler is his ability to read signposts, timetables, maps, and guidebooks. In the literary tour these are represented by the words of the English language, dictionaries which help you understand them, and the histories which help you to interpret the literature. Through contacts with these signposts you will come to understand increasingly the meanings of words and to appreciate the skill with which great writers have combined them into sentences to form a style all their own. The extension of your vocabulary will be useful in your everyday life, for it will serve to lift you out of that helpless, inarticulate state in which we so often fall back on the meaningless phrase, "You know what I mean."

On the great tour you are about to undertake, not only will you journey all over our country but, because you will have the company of experienced travelers, you will also find it possible to enter into the minds and personalities of human beings. With such distinguished guides as Washington Irving, Mark Twain, O. Henry, Jack London, and Carl Sandburg, you will see human nature. From New England to the Sierras and in half a dozen nationalities the kinks of the human mind will be exposed. And after you have lived the intense sorrows, the joys, the kindness, and the hilarious wit of other people — even though it is only in a book — you will have become more grown-up, more mellowed, and wiser in your judgments. This insight into human nature is another thing that reading gives you.

Through acquaintance with our great poets you will also learn the hidden spiritual beauty of many seemingly commonplace objects. A

birch tree, a wild duck, even so small a thing as a spider, will become more significant through a better understanding of it as the handiwork of God; even the slums of our cities, receiving the magic touch of a poet's imagination, become eloquent with spiritual truth. After your trip you will look upon the familiar life around you with new eyes and a realization that nothing is humdrum or commonplace to one who has learned to know the truth and beauty which permeate the universe and glorify all its parts.

Moreover, you will find through your reading a new outlet for emotions. Especially in poetry you will discover that the genius of a singer has turned into crystalline words an emotion you have felt but never expressed. You will pause to say, "That is just the way I often feel. How perfectly he expresses *my* emotions. I must try to remember his exact words."

Finally, the tour outlined in this book will take you back along the whole thrilling adventure of the building of America. You will go with Captain John Smith into the Indian camp from which he escapes alive only by the intervention of Pocahontas. With the pilgrims from the *Mayflower* you will search the New England coast for a landing place. You will travel along for a while with a New England lady on a journey from Boston to New York in the days when it took two weeks to cover less than two hundred miles; and you will explore the fringes of the Southern settlements with a witty gentleman planter. Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson and George Washington will rise before you and fight, each in his own way, to make a nation of the scattered colonies. You will go with the pioneers across the plains, with the traders and trappers into the mighty Rockies and on to the fair slopes of the Pacific coast. You will see the growth of America through the eyes of the men who watched the actual growth, and you will think the thoughts of the men who laid out the foundations of our country. This living over the past as if it were the present is one of the important experiences you will gain from reading American literature.

What more should you expect to gain from the tour as a whole? You will gain an understanding of the American heritage. The stream of our national literature which starts from New England and Virginia will widen out for you; you will see how, as time passed, American authors came to reflect the struggle for independence and to express the ambitions, the ideals, and the emotions of a new and great nation. When you have completed this year's tour through the inexhaustible attractions of our literature, you will have found a deeper

reason for the love of country which is called patriotism. Best of all, you will be wise in the ways of this easy and delightful kind of traveling which can bring adventure and understanding to you all the rest of your life.

#### SOME EARLIER EXCURSIONS RECALLED

On this tour of American literature which you and your companions have undertaken, doubtless there will be some places to which you will wish to make excursions of your own, just as there will be places where you will wish to linger longer than the rest of the party. Still other spots will need to be noted down for future visits when their attractions will make more appeal to your interest than they do now. For the side trips this book — as a guidebook — now and then will make definite suggestions based on the experiences of those who have traveled this way before.

But before we start we should consider some of the interesting places we shall have to omit from this trip because most of our party have visited them before. You will wish at the end of this tour to have seen all the interesting places along the route, and because of this you should check up on your previous travels. If you have missed important spots that are universally visited, plan to slip them in as side trips in the regular tour. Here is a list of such places. Perhaps you can tell of other interesting American books with which you have already made friends. Great literature, you must remember, has a universal appeal, and many of the books commonly read by children were not written for them at all; likewise, books written for children are often enjoyed by grownups.

Alcott, Louisa May, *Little Women*

In spite of the name not a girls' book, but one that relates adventures of young people in a way which interests boys as well as girls.

Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, *The Story of a Bad Boy*

An interesting true story of a not-so-bad-after-all boy in a New England village. The snow fight is a classic.

Clemens, Samuel Langhorne (Mark Twain), *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*; *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Immortal boys who play pranks, scout along the Mississippi, discover a murder, unearth treasures, fall in love, and get lost in caves.

Cooper, James Fenimore, *The Last of the Mohicans*

Cooper wrote rattling good adventure stories which have lived a hundred years. You may prefer to read *The Deerslayer* or *The Spy*.



Eggleston, Edward, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*

The exciting adventures of a young schoolmaster who "boarded 'round" in the early pioneer days of Indiana and had to match wits with the community "toughs."

Hale, Edward Everett, "The Man without a Country"

An American soldier curses his country and pays a strange penalty. The story is so well told that many still believe it really happened.

Harris, Joel Chandler, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*

The first of several "Uncle Remus" collections of the inimitable Negro folk tales about Br'er Rabbit, Br'er Wolf, Br'er Fox, and the others.

Hawthorne, Nathaniel, "The Great Stone Face"

Which man among many candidates will turn out to resemble the noble stone face in the mountains? Hawthorne defines for us true beauty of character.

Irving, Washington, "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"; "Rip Van Winkle"

Two of our oldest and best American yarns. Everybody knows them.

London, Jack, *The Call of the Wild*

A thrilling tale of Alaska and the Eskimo dog.

Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, *The Song of Hiawatha; The Courtship of Miles Standish; Evangeline*

Legends of the Indian, the Puritan, and the Acadian. A unique group of long poems which every boy and girl should know.

Poe, Edgar Allan, "The Gold Bug"

One of our very first "detective" stories, and certainly the most famous.

Tarkington, Booth, *Penrod; Penrod and Sam*

Many a laugh these boys afford through the adventures of everyday home and school life.

Whittier, John Greenleaf, *Snowbound*

Our classic picture of a New England farm family of an earlier day.



*Courtesy of the Yale University Art Gallery*

THE ROLE OF EARLY PAINTERS Early American painting served many needs now served by photography, notably the recording of historic events and portraiture. John Trumbull's "Battle of Bunker Hill" (*above*) justifies the reputation he enjoyed as a painter of martial scenes, and John Singleton Copley's painting of his own family (*below*) shows the skill that made him a favorite among portrait painters.

*Courtesy of Copley Amory*





*Courtesy of the Worcester Art Museum*

**PAINTERS OF THE SEA.** All New England is near the rocky, picturesque coast and the sea. No wonder that New England produced two of our finest marine painters. Winslow Homer's "The Gale" (*above*) and Albert Pinkham Ryder's "Toilers of the Sea" (*below*) characteristically show man struggling against the might of wind and water.

*Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*





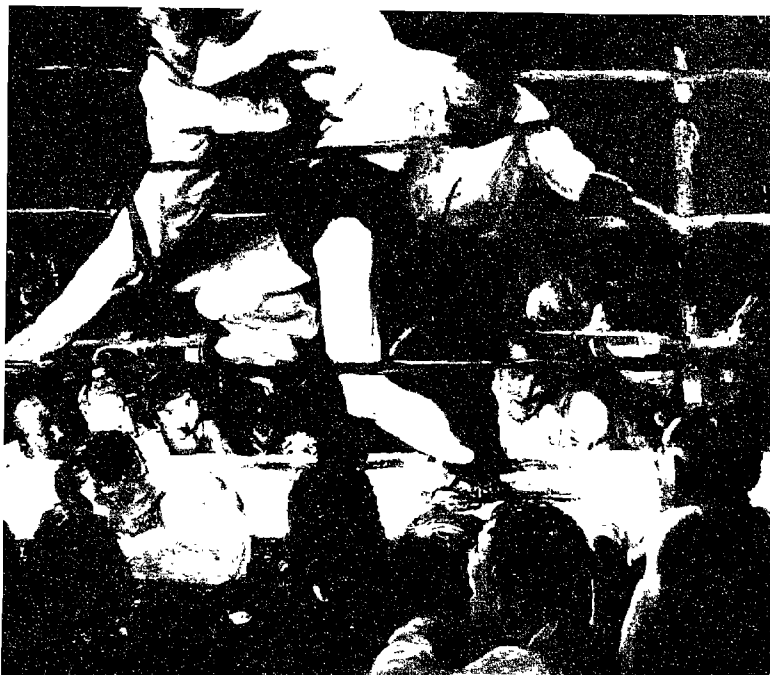
*Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*

THE AMERICAN PROMISE. One of the most widely known and loved American paintings is "Peace and Plenty" (*above*) by the great landscape artist George Inness, who caught in his scene of a quiet, fruitful valley the vision that led Americans over the Alleghenies to the plains beyond.

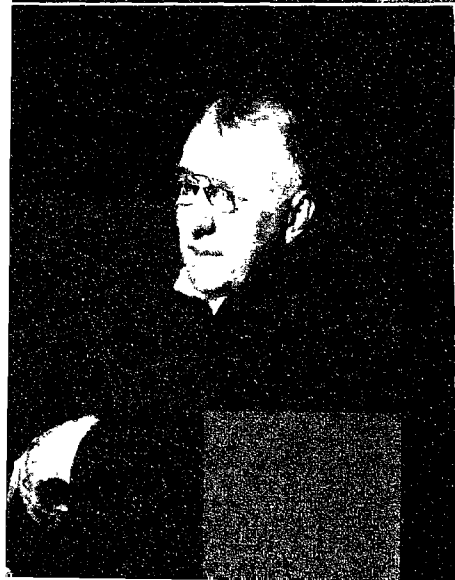
*By permission of Washington University, St. Louis, Mo.*

Pioneers trudge on toward that promised land, in this painting of a group led by the great pathfinder and scout, Daniel Boone. The artist was George Caleb Bingham, who is noted for his work on such peculiarly American themes.





*Courtesy of The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Hinman B. Hulbut Collection*



**VARIED STYLES.** Varied as American life is, American painters have developed varied techniques to catch each phase. The bold style of George Wesley Bellows is ideal for such subjects as his "Stag at Sharkey's" (*above*), and the smooth perfection of John Singer Sargent is as perfectly adapted to his fine portraits. At the left is James Whitcomb Riley, as Sargent painted him.



*Courtesy of The Hackley Art Gallery*

MIDWESTERN MOODS. Two emotional extremes of life in the Midwestern farming section are expressed in these canvases by two favorite sons of the Middle West. John Steuart Curry pictures the frantic rush to shelter before the approaching storm in "Tornado over Kansas" (*above*), while Grant Wood lays before us the patterned serenity of his Iowa fields at harvest time (*below*).

*Courtesy of Grant Wood and The Marshall Field Collection*





*From Rockwell Kentiana, copyright, 1933, by courtesy of  
Rockwell Kent and Chicago Art Institute*

QUIET NEW ENGLAND. The rocky coast of New England is not its only charm for artists. In Vermont Rockwell Kent, famous for his woodcuts as well as his paintings, found the serene landscape reproduced above, with its shy deer against a background of sunlight and shadow, drifted snow and bare mountainside. Luigi Lucioni, who paints with photographic fidelity to detail, catches the quiet beauty of a simple farm scene in his "Vermont Classic" (*below*).

*Courtesy of Ferargil Galleries*





*Courtesy of New School for Social Research, New York*

THOMAS BENTON. Years of study abroad developed Missouri-born Thomas Hart Benton, but he remains one of the most intensely American of our painters. He can hardly be surpassed in his grasp of major developments of his age, as shown in the mural above, or in his understanding and appreciation of his native background. With his dry Midwestern humor, he gives the title "Conversation" to the pastoral Missouri group below.

*Courtesy of Thomas H. Benton and Associated American Artists*







*Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*

IMPRESSION VS. IDEA. Charles Burchfield, critic of American life, in "November Evening" (*above*) seems to deplore the buildings with their false fronts, even while the sweep of plain and sky clothes his whole scene in majesty. But Paul Sample drives home the point of his picture of a New England auction (*below*) with its title: "Matthew 6:19. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth . . ."

*Courtesy of Ferargil Galleries*





## AMERICAN FICTION

### *Two Modern Short Stories*

TO START the book off with a dash of fun, we have placed at the beginning of our selections two modern stories, typical of those found in the better popular magazines. These may be considered an appetizer before the main course of your short-story dinner.

Then follows a brief résumé of the development of fiction in America and a guide to short stories. The meat course will begin with Irving and follow chronologically through Hawthorne, Poe, Aldrich, Harte, Harris, and O. Henry to the moderns. It will offer stories by some of the present masters, including Sinclair Lewis, Wilbur Daniel Steele, and Pearl Buck. In their stories are found almost all the elements which have been introduced into the short story during its hundred years of life. In their work we can see much of Poe's art and craftsmanship, Hawthorne's spiritual insight, Bret Harte's local color, Aldrich's surprise ending, and O. Henry's journalistic style.

The dinner closes with a very modern story by one of our younger writers, Jesse Stuart, whose work illustrates the organic quality, the "formlessness," of many of our most recent stories. At the very end is a final tidbit by a sixteen-year-old high-school student, and the dinner is over.

## BOOTH TARKINGTON (1869- )

For about a quarter of a century Booth Tarkington has been known for his humorous portrayals of youth, especially lovelorn youth in the late teen age.

Like Riley, who encouraged him to become an author, Tarkington is a Hoosier, and lived until recently in his birthplace, Indianapolis. After Princeton he tried for six years to write, and earned \$22.50. Success came at last with *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1900), which is one of the best of the historical romances that flourished at the turn of the century. His next important success came when he turned to humorous stories of boyhood with *Penrod* (1914) and *Seventeen* (1916). All the world knows Penrod and Willy Baxter. They are in the characteristic Tarkington vein, which has not even yet given out. Even in his plays, like *Clarence* (1919), characters of the same type appear. Possibly his more serious novels of American life, like *The Turmoil* (1915), *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1918), or his masterpiece, *Alice Adams* (1921), will be longer remembered; but to thousands of American boys and girls "Tarkington" means characters like Penrod, Willy Baxter, or Mr. Indiana in the following story. By his humor, his sentiment, and his gift for easy narrative he has earned a place beside Thomas Bailey Aldrich and Mark Twain — the three best creators of the American boy in our literature.

## HENRY THE GREAT

This story gives a vivid and humorous picture of a self-conscious youth whose personal problems — chiefly emotional — are to him more important than the fate of nations. Mr. Tarkington seems to find amusement, too, in two rather absurd phases of the great game of advertising: the amateur radio contest and the Miss America competition. In short, you are about to read a typical Tarkington story.

A BRISK young couple noisily laughed their way across the lobby of the Arlington Hotel in Boston — a girl whose summer blouse displayed a gold satin ribbon lettered in black, MISS VERMONT, and a tall youth similarly labeled MR. CALIFORNIA. "Make me sick!" an elderly guest complained to a clerk at the desk. "In all the nineteen years I've been living at the Arlington, I've never heard so much noise. Who are all these juveniles? Convention of defectives?"

"Defectives?" the clerk said, humorously affecting shock. "Nay! Our country's chosen intelligentsia!"

Here he acquired another listener. This was a blue-eyed, sandy-haired boy of appearance so youthful that perhaps his reason for wearing a derby hat was to make him look older. The weather was warm; all other hats in sight were of straw, and maybe, too, he hoped that this derby hat, a new one, lent knowingness to a face both bright and timid. Carrying a new leatherine suitcase of which no bellboy had sought to relieve him, he had been standing not far from the desk for five or ten minutes, sometimes clearing his throat authoritatively to show that he wasn't worrying about anything. Hearing the word "intelligentsia," however, he moved nearer.

"There's to be ninety-six of 'em altogether," the clerk continued. "It's the Sidex Corporation's Intellect Prize Contest. Two Intellect Prize Winners, a male and a female, from every state in the Union."

"What?" The complaining guest looked again at Miss Vermont and Mr. California, now waiting for an elevator, and his staring eyes threatened to become bloodshot. "Intellect? Oh, my soul!"

"Intellect, sure!" The clerk tried to mollify him. "You don't object to beauty contests where bathing girls get elected Miss Florida or Miss New Jersey, do you? The Sidex people simply got up a broadcasting Intellect Contest, instead, open to everybody twenty-two years old or younger. The candidates sent in eight-minute essays and the best ones in each state were picked out to make speeches over the radio, and the listeners-in of that state sent in votes on which were the best. The young man and young lady that had the most votes in each state got the prize of a free trip to Boston, and the Sidex people put them up at the Arlington, of course, because they read our circulars!" The clerk laughed affably. "See? Shows Boston's still the right place for Intellect Prize Winners to come to."

"As if poor old Boston didn't have enough troubles of her —" The guest interrupted himself as the leatherine suitcase bumped the calf of his leg. "Don't crowd me, bud. I'm on my way, anyhow, if you want to register."

He departed, and the boy in the derby hat, nervous, swallowed nothing so plainly that the operation could be traced along the surface of his slender throat.

"Room?" the clerk asked. "Got a reservation?"

"Sir? I — I guess I ought to sign the book."

"I see."

The clerk handed him a dipped pen.

The boy in the derby hat hesitated, grew red, then applied the pen to the register and wrote carefully:

*Mr. Indiana, R.R., No. 2*  
*Emmonsville, Indiana*

The clerk looked at the inscription, glanced at the inscriber, and seemed surprised. "Well, well! So you're one of the Intellect Prize Winners, too, are you? You must be the youngest of the whole bunch." He smiled amiably. "I expect you might as well put your name down though."

"Sir?"

"Just write your own name there alongside of 'Mr. Indiana,' " the clerk explained. "Just in Boston we're more or less supposed to rather keep track of our guests' real names."

"Yes, sir." Even redder than he had been, the boy wrote as requested, "Henry Hopgood Dilmer."

"Excellent," the clerk said with gravity. "Quite all right, Mr. Indiana. Shoot you right up, Mr. Indiana."

"Up? Where —"

"To your room. Might like to brush your hat or wash your face or something. After that you're supposed to join up with the Sidex people on the mezzanine." The clerk rang a bell, and then, seeing that the boy had removed his derby hat and was looking at it, added, "I didn't mean it's dusty; it's just a custom. This bellboy'll carry your bag for you, Mr. Indiana. Four-fourteen."

Mr. Indiana, or, as he had heretofore been generally known to those who knew him, Henry Hopgood Dilmer, looked rather anxiously at the bellboy and also at the suitcase; then gave up the one to the other, and, as the bellboy carried the suitcase immediately to an elevator, decided after a moment's hesitation to follow him. The bellboy took the suitcase into the elevator, rose to the fourth floor, went down a corridor, opened a door marked 414, and entered a bedchamber; Mr. Indiana was still following. The room had two beds, and, at the foot of one, a closed traveling bag lay upon a portable stool.

"You're doubled up with Mr. Idaho," the bellboy said, placed Mr. Indiana's suitcase upon a stand at the foot of the other bed, went to the open window, adjusted the shade slightly, coughed several times, and then walked slowly toward the door. "That all?" he asked. "Anything else I can do for you?"

"No, I don't guess so."

The bellboy lingered one moment longer, then made a brief sound with his breath only and left the room. Henry Hopgood Dilmer, uncertain about the meaning of the sound the bellboy had made, looked again at his hat, then went to a dressing table over which hung a mir-

rör, looked at himself, and forgot the bellboy. After a time he extended his hand toward his reflection.

"Listen, good ole Mr. Indiana," he said earnestly. "Well, here we are in Boston! Shake."

He moved his extended hand up and down several times, replaced the derby hat upon his head, returned to the corridor, found the elevator doors, and pressed a button — the wrong one. A door opened, he stepped within the car and ascended to the tenth floor; whereupon, as he remained in a corner, the attendant, a cold and elderly blonde, glanced at him.

"This is the top," she said.

"Ma'am?" he asked. "Is it?"

She made no response; the car went down, taking in several passengers on its way. At the office floor these stepped out, others stepped in, and the car ascended again. At the top floor the attendant again looked at Henry. "Listen," she said. "Say, listen. What floor you want?"

Another slight undulation of his neck became visible. "Well, I — I'm supposed to be looking for the — the mezzanine."

"Then why'n't you get off at it?"

"Ma'am?"

"Oh, me!" she said. "Oh, me!"

She was kinder, however, than she seemed, for, near the conclusion of the next descent, she stopped the elevator, opened the door, and spoke in a loud and distinct voice: "Mezzanine floor."

Henry Hopgood Dilmer, abruptly breathless, stepped out of the elevator and found himself in a corridor thronged and noisy with young Intellect Prize Winners. To Henry, however, they didn't appear to be young; in his eyes they possessed a daunting maturity, most of them being apparently as much as twenty-one or even twenty-two years old, and he was discomfited by their seeming to be already upon terms of lively familiarity with one another. Mr. California, in particular, was appalling to Henry. Tall Mr. California, hooked by the arm to laughing Miss Vermont, strolled up and down the corridor, confident, loud-voiced, and jovial in his blue serge coat, white trousers, and impressive white-and-black shoes. He seemed to know everybody, exchanged laughter and slang with almost all groups; and there were others like him — easy, free-spoken, and free-moving — swarthy Mr. New York, merry Mr. South Carolina, handsome Mr. Kentucky, and, largest and noisiest of all the girls, Miss Delaware.

Henry had the guilty feeling that all these people immediately

wondered who he was and, since he alone was badgeless, looked upon him as an intruder. He stood with his back to the wall near the closed elevator shaft, removed his hat, and stared at it frowningly. He protracted his inspection longer than he thought plausible and began to blush, thinking, "They won't believe I'm looking for a speck on my hat this long. I got to do something else; I simply got to. They'll get the idea I'm embarrassed and think I don't know anything. I can't keep on doing this the whole day!" He turned the hat over, looked inside it, frowned more deeply. "Maybe they'll think I put my railroad ticket in it and can't find it," he thought. "No, they won't. I simply got to quit this!"

Opposite him, across the corridor, four girls sat rather bleakly together upon a sofa — a group neglected by Mr. California and other conspicuous male Prize Winners. Even among Intellectuals, it appeared, there could be wallflowers. One of these four was stout and spectacled; one was thin, tall, and severe; one was noticeably what is called plain of feature. The fourth was small, a delicate and almost childlike figure; and the extreme forward dip of her white straw hat so obscured her face in shadow that her interested observation of Henry Hopgood Dilmer went unnoticed. The golden badges of the four showed them to be Miss Massachusetts, Miss Minnesota, Miss Oklahoma, and Miss Virginia. The little one with the down-bent hat brim was Miss Virginia.

Miss Virginia whispered to her neighbors on the sofa, "That poor young little thing ovuh yonduh's scared out of his wits. Somebody's got to do something for him or he'll run home!" She rose, crossed the corridor, and spoke to Henry in a pretty voice. "I wonduh you lookin' for Mr. Heilbrenner? His desk's out on the mezzanine gall'ry. Like me to show you?"

"Well, I —" Henry said. "Who? I guess from your badge you must be Miss Virginia."

"Wonderful!" she returned. "But how's anybody goin' to tell who you are?"

Henry began to regain some self-confidence. "I come from out West." He coughed boldly. "I am Mr. Indiana."

She laughed. "Mr. California wouldn't say you from very out Wes'! I thought I ought to come help you some 'cause looks like maybe you and I got kind of a tie between us, as it were."

"Tie? What kind of a —"

"Looks like we two the very littles' young Prize Winnuhs in the whole United States, Mr. Indiana. I'm the younges' of all the girls. How old you?"

"Me? I'll be eighteen next year," Henry said.

"You will? You mean by the far end of next year, don't you? I won't. It's the everlastin' livin' truth I'll only be seventeen even then. I expect you and me about the same age and liable to get lost in Boston if we don't look out for ourselves!" Under the concealing hat brim there was a twinkle of kind brown eyes already become maternal. "Expect I'll have to be the one does the lookin' out too! Tell the truth now; don't brag, mistuh. You evuh been this far from home before?"

"Well — no, not altogether." All at once Henry became confidential. "I been on motor trips with my family to Wyandotte Cave and Indianapolis and Terre Haute lots of times, and my father and I went to the Century of Progress, but we stayed in kind of a boarding-house. I never been upstairs exactly in exactly this kind of a hotel before — I mean not exactly." He followed an impulse toward further conversation. "What was your topic in the contest? Mine was 'Fascism Unmasked.'" He laughed with a modest carelessness. "I don't s'pose you happened to be listening in and heard it maybe?"

"I'm awful sorry. We get so much static in our radio some nights we jus' miss everything, 'specially what's the very bes'. I don't know how I happened to win the contest in my state, myself; I jus' wrote a little no-'count piece and spoke it."

Henry looked judicial. "Well, it might have been on account of your voice."

"Think it might? That's awful sweet of you, Mr. Indiana."

"Oh, no," Henry said. "I never say anything except what I mean. I always believe in being sincere, don't you? I think it's the highest quality there is. Don't you?"

"'Deed I do," she said. "Listen, Mr. Indiana; you haven't even got your badge yet. I'm goin' march you straight out to Mr. Heilbrenner on the mezzanine gall'ry, 'cause you got to show him your Sidex card from home and get your MR. INDIANA ribbon pinned onto you. We may be the younges', but anyways we goin' show people who us two little things are!"

Henry felt himself adopted, sweetly owned, and looked out for. The feathery touch of Miss Virginia's fingers upon his sleeve guided him through the crowd, led him out upon an open gallery beyond the corridor and to a table where sat a stout middle-aged man and two young women, his assistants.

"This gentleman's Mr. Indiana, Mr. Heilbrenner," Miss Virginia said. . . . "Hand Mr. Heilbrenner your Sidex card from home, Mr. Indiana. . . . That's right. Now you goin' get your badge pinned



onto you, pretty as a picture! ” Then, when one of the assistants had properly decorated Henry’s lapel, Miss Virginia inquired, “ Now don’t that strong little chest o’ yours feel proud as Satan, Mr. Indiana? ”

“ Satan? ” Henry asked, somewhat disturbed. “ Well, I’d hardly say — ”

“ Come on,” she interrupted cozily, and again he felt her light touch on his arm. “ We goin’ back to that sofa where Miss Massachusetts, Miss Minnesota, and Miss Oklahoma sittin’ all alone. I wouldn’t like ’em to think I’d run away from ’em, ’cause I’m scared they kind o’ feel a little outside the big show, as it were. You be nice to them, Mr. Indiana, so now they goin’ feel they got a man to escort ’em round, show ’em attentions. Come on! ”

Henry returned with her to the sofa in the corridor and, upon Miss Virginia’s warm presentation of him, was received affably by Miss Massachusetts, Miss Minnesota, and Miss Oklahoma. “ Look a-here, ladies,” bighearted Miss Virginia said. “ Look what we got! Anybody accuse us of bein’ too much intellect now, we can prove our softuh natures ’cause now we got a man — and goin’ to hold onto him too! From now on we four goin’ to claim Indiana jus’ about almos’ the very grandes’ state in the Union! ”

“ It’s got the center of population of the United States in it,” Henry said seriously. “ Thirty miles from Columbus, Indiana, statistics show that — ”

He was interrupted by a loud clapping of hands for silence. Mr. Heilbrenner appeared in the corridor and sonorously made an announcement. “ Now we’re all going downstairs,” he said. “ Busses are waiting there and we’ll all get in and be taken to the Public Library, the Art Museum, Faneuil Hall, Bunker Hill Monument, and the State House, after which we return here for lunch. After lunch the busses will leave to show us other sights of Boston, Cambridge, Longfellow’s Home, and Harvard University. Afterward we meet for dinner in the dining room, after which there will be dancing for those who care to indulge. Tomorrow morning at ten o’clock the busses will conduct us on a motor trip to Concord, Lexington, and other historic points of interest, and in the evening we will return here for the big Prize Winners’ Banquet, when there will be a Surprise Announcement made that I’m sure will bring each and every one of you a thrill of the highest pleasure. You will all be immensely pleased with the surprise Sidex has for you at the banquet tomorrow night. Now please all follow me downstairs to the busses. Sidex thanks you! ”

"You walk with Miss Massachusetts," Miss Virginia whispered to Henry, pushing him gently forward; and as he frankly looked blank, she added, "Don't worry; the rest of us three goin' stick closer to you than the buttons on your jacket!"

She was almost as good as her word, and in the bus he had the pleasure of finding himself beside her. In the bright summer daylight he had another pleasure too; rather gradually he discovered that under the obscuring hat was one of the very prettiest piquant faces he had ever seen. This was not bad news to Henry; he became almost as conscious of Miss Virginia as he was of himself and of his golden badge. Moreover, in chatting with him she sometimes used a half-smothered monosyllable that warmed his spine.

"Why, of course I love my grandma, hon," she said, on the way from Bunker Hill Monument to the State House. "What makes you say you hate yours so bad?"

Henry drew a deep breath. "Look, Miss Virginia, did — did — do — do — do you mean it when you call me 'hon' that way?"

"Now!" she said, and laughed. "Don't get mad at my little ways! What makes you hate your grandma?"

"I don't mean I hate her exactly," Henry explained. "I guess it's mostly because she lives at our house and's pretty faultfinding with me and always takes my sister's part. I guess I'm pretty critical, because I got a critical nature. I wish she was like you."

"Who? Your grandma?"

"Yes," Henry said. "I wish she was and I wish my sister was, too. There'd be a lot more peace in our house if both of 'em were like you."

"Tell me some more about your grandma and your sister."

"Well," Henry said, "there's something wrong with both of 'em."

Miss Virginia looked sympathetic. "You mean they got something they don't feel well?"

"No," Henry said. "They never had a day's sickness in their lives. The trouble is they can't stand the slightest criticism. Well, I got to be sincere, haven't I? I think sincerity's the highest quality there is; don't you?" He paused. "Oh, yes; we did talk about that. What else do you think ought to be in a person's nature if you were really going to care for them?"

She looked solemn. "Well, maybe I think they ought to come from Indiana!"

"Do — do you?" he said in a husky whisper; then saw that under her hat she was laughing at him charmingly.

Henry felt bewitched; all at once he was even more conscious of

Miss Virginia than he was of himself or his golden ribbon, and during the rest of that day his condition continually got more so. Even Longfellow's Home was only a hazy background for the bright little figure from the South; Henry's Intellect Prize Winning visit to Boston hadn't really taken him to New England. Mr. Indiana walked in a dream of sunnier fields and softer skies.

Miss Virginia, not dreamy at all, continued to share him honorably with Miss Massachusetts, Miss Minnesota, and Miss Oklahoma. Most of the Prize Winners, like Mr. California and Miss Vermont, had coupled up, so to speak, with a stag element left over — youths who held together defensively, a masculine clique apart. Miss Virginia made Henry as much of a substitute for these as she could. Whenever she saw a lonely girl standing neglected, Miss Virginia would tuck her arm in Henry's, join that girl, introduce Henry, and stay for a little chat. Miss Virginia and Henry became gratefully known to all the friendless.

That night at the dance, however, Miss Virginia became known to everybody else. Henry's first sight of her without a hat and wearing the daintiest white silk dancing dress he'd ever seen undid his vocal organs. He looked at her, gasped, "Oh, my!" and was unable to speak further. Then they danced together, and, when she murmured, "I jus' knew you'd turn out to be the bes' little dancer in the worl'!" he could only swallow and respond with a breathless "Um-hum" that fatuously sounded affirmative.

He didn't dance with her long. Miss Virginia, an unnoticeable little person all that day, was revealed in her evening gown and hatlessness transformed — nay, transfigured. She had that ever-fascinating contrast of rippled hair lighter than trim dark eyebrows, dark appealing eyes, and dark coquettish lashes; her subtle little figure seemed woven out of grace itself; and she danced, as forebears of hers would have said, with the foot of a fairy. Many eyes began to follow her; wolfish stags cut in on Henry, and so did young gentlemen somewhat committed in other directions — Miss Vermont began to be peevish with tall Mr. California. In a word, Miss Virginia was the belle of the ball.

"Listen!" Henry said to her emotionally, late in the evening, during a short whirl round the room. "Look! You don't act the way you did all day any more. I know some of 'em got tucks and I haven't, but there's one thing I got to know."

"Only one? What?"

"Do you — do you call all of 'em 'hon,' too, the way you did me?"

The lovely eyes, profoundly reproachful, seemed about to fill with tears. "My own bes' little man bringin' accusations agains' me already?"

"No, not accusations exactly, but —"

"That's right!" Her eyes shed sunshine again and the light hand upon his shoulder was lifted to give his cheek a little pat. "Listen, hon; you danced with Miss Massachusetts and Miss Minnesota and Miss Oklahoma and Miss South Dakota and Miss Wisconsin and everybody else I told you to?"

"Yes, I did," he said resentfully. "I was pretty near an hour getting away from that big ole Miss South Dakota too; and all that time you were —"

"Listen, hon," she said. "You haven't danced with Miss Indiana yet, and you certainly owe it to her the mos' of any. You go straight and dance with her, and I want you to promise me something. Promise?"

"You know I'd promise you anything."

"Goody," she said. "You promise me not cut in to dance with me one more time tonight!"

"What?"

"You promised! You keep cuttin' in on every girl here that's too long with one partner."

"But I —" The heavy hand of Mr. Iowa fell upon his shoulder; he had to relinquish her.

"Remembuh, you promised!" her sweet voice called as she swung away with Mr. Iowa.

Henry danced with plain girls, with girls taller than himself, with girls who couldn't dance; and all the while a painful question perplexed him: Had she decided that he was too ignoble to be seen with, or was it really a compliment to him that she bestowed him, as it were, upon less-favored girls? Then, at the end of the evening, when the musicians were departing, he saw her at the other end of the big room — laughing, happy, brilliantly surrounded — and his question seemed to be answered.

"Ha-ha!" he said ironically to himself aloud, though in a low voice. "No use for you if you haven't got a tuck! Just wanted to get rid of me. A lot of use being Mr. Indiana if all this had to happen to me, isn't it?"

In his bedchamber, whither he went without giving her another glance, he was morose with his roommate, Mr. Idaho, who would fain have been talkative.

"Boy!" Mr. Idaho exclaimed. "Is that Miss Virginia some on her feet? Boy! Has she got eyes? Oh, man! Listen, Hoosier lad, if that big contest comes off, does Miss Virginia get the vote of Idaho? Boy! Didn't meet her, did you?"

"I did, too," Henry said heavily. "What contest?"

"Well, it's only a rumor; but it's supposed to leaked out through one of Mr. Heilbrenner's lady secretaries' being a cousin of Miss Massachusetts. Miss Mass spilled it to a couple other girls she's got intimate with, and they promised to keep it secret; but it seems Miss Minnesota passed it out snub nosa<sup>1</sup> to somebody else, so it kind of leaked around here and there tonight. It may be baloney; but it's supposed to be the inside of the big secret surprise Mr. Heilbrenner's going to announce at the banquet tomorrow night."

Henry got into bed, gloomily laid his head upon the pillow. "I don't know what you're talking about."

"Well, keep it under your hat, baby; but this rumor is that the whole forty-eight states at the banquet's going to elect a Miss America. Hot diggety! Watch Miss Virginia in that race! Boy! Listen, Middle East; then, after the convention elects Miss America, the rumor is that —"

"Look," Henry said. "Put out the light if you got your night clo'es on, will you? I'd like to get a little sleep."

Rebuffed, breezy Mr. Idaho satirically paraphrased a lullaby fragment, instructed Henry to rest his little woolly Indiana head on his Mammy's breast; but at the same time, for his own sake, did put out the light and almost immediately afterward slept.

Mr. Indiana's state of mind was less fortunate. Far, far from kith and kin, lying restless in a vast Boston hotel, Henry was tormented by imaginings; tall glittering Mr. California in a tuck, darkly fashionable Mr. New York in a tuck, handsome Mr. Kentucky betucked, others in tucks — all old-looking, men-about-town figures that swept Miss Virginia gleaming with them in a hateful dance across the sky, while she made cruel music with her sweet and cozy laughter. So she might even become Miss America, might she? And once he'd thought — ha-ha! — that she had time for him!

In the morning when the ninety-six Prize Winners again met in the corridor, Henry was chill though tremulous when she hurried to join him. "I bid you good morning," he said repellently.

"What?" she asked, astonished. "What in the livin' worl's the mattuh with you, Mr. Indiana?"

<sup>1</sup> snub nosa: a humorous and intentional corruption of *sub rosa*, which means secretly.

"Nothing," he said. "Nothing at all. I can't help seeing I've gotten disgusting to you, can I?"

"Gotten what?"

"Disgusting," Henry said. "Do you think simply because I don't wear a tuck at some ole dance, I can't tell when I've gotten disgusting to some girl?"

She put her small hands upon his shoulders and shook him. "Why, you sweet little thing!" she cried.

Henry, dazed, spoke swallowing. "You — you don't mean it. You say it, but — but you don't mean it."

"You'll see!" she said, and gave him another ineffable pat upon his cheek. "Listen, hon, you be good as gol' today and keep pickin' up Miss Louisiana's parasol and gloves and handkerchief when she drops 'em, and carrying Miss Oregon's camera for her and Miss Minnesota's notebooks, same as I got you to yesterday. Talk nice to Miss Vermont whenever you get a chance, too, 'cause it looks like she begins to feel kind o' left out. You rastle roun' among 'em jus' like yesterday and don't worry about me, 'cause —"

"No?" Henry said, frosty again. "Excuse me; but you needn't be scared I desire to intrude my presence on you, since you think I'm so dis —"

"Aw, hon!" Miss Virginia was tender with him, irresistibly. "You so far from home, aren't you goin' to let me be your little mamma for you?"

"Yes," Henry gulped. "If you say so."

He was wax again; but ten minutes later, seated beside Miss Oregon on the way to Lexington and Concord, he once more felt the hollowness of representing the state of Indiana intellectually — Miss Virginia was not even in the same bus with him.

"All right," he said to himself. "I'll do what she told me, and then, if she ever comes near me again, I'll laugh. I'll look at her — then I'll laugh!"

But Miss Virginia, even more the belle of the ball today than last night, wasn't near him again until the ninety-six were seating themselves for lunch in the dining room of a hotel on the Gloucester rocks. Then, just as he sat down next to Miss Vermont, there was the touch of a hand upon his shoulder, and, looking up, but not laughing, he found her fondly approving face close to his own.

"You doin' fine, hon!" she whispered hurriedly, and, attended by Mr. California, Mr. Idaho, Mr. Maine, and Mr. Ohio, went on gaily to a distant table.

For the one magnetizing moment Henry was warm, breathless,

convinced. Alas, that moment was but a drop of honey in a gallon of vinegar! The rest of the day was all sour; Henry had only glimpses of her, remote from him and resplendent — the center of every group to which she fluttered; but fluttering not again to him. What time<sup>1</sup> the busses returned to Boston and the Arlington Hotel in twilight, Henry felt that for him all was ended — he had but one desire, a bitter one.

He wished to confront her, to unpin from his lapel the golden ribbon with MR. INDIANA large-lettered upon it, to cast it at her feet and say, "There! Long as I live I'll never write another essay or deliver another oration or win another prize trip. That's all you've done to me!"

This was still his mood as he found the place reserved for him at the Sidex Intellect Prize Winners' Banquet that evening; and jubilating music issuing from a grilled balcony made him feel more dramatic, but not happier. Henry's seat, alphabetic, was at a small table with Miss Indiana, Miss Illinois and Mr. Illinois, while upon a long dais at the head of the room gleamed with cutlery the flower-decked white plateau where sat Mr. Heilbrenner and thirteen representatives of the thirteen original states. Mr. Heilbrenner had proved human. At his right hand, sparkling, heartbreakingly gay and beautiful, sat Miss Virginia. Through the music and all other sounds her laughter ran as distinctly as if uttered by little bells of silver.

Henry heard that cruel tinkling almost continually. The back of his chair was toward the dais, and he turned only four times during the serving of the meal to look at her. Not once did he find her looking at him.

"All right, Miss Unsincere!" he said, almost audibly. "You can go!"

When the coffee had been brought, Mr. Heilbrenner rose and rapped loudly upon the table with a gavel. "Sidex congratulates each and every one of you!" he proclaimed, while a microphone was being placed before him. "We are now come to the last and most important session of this great Sidex enterprise, and a few minutes hence our proceedings will begin to be broadcast over a wide hookup. Yesterday morning I promised you the announcement of a surprise at this banquet, and I know that each and every heart here is beating high with excitement as I rise to tell you what it is."

"Mine isn't." Henry, with his chair now facing the dais, was mutteringly sardonic. "What I care? Puh!"

<sup>1</sup> What time: by the time.

"In these two days," Mr. Heilbrenner continued, "you, from all parts of the Union, have associated together, have learned one another's characters, have formed estimates and opinions. Previously, listening in at home, many of you heard one another's prize speeches during the Sidex Hour. Sidex believes you will judge justly. Before each and every one of you, at your tables, you have doubtless noticed a small pencil and an envelope, each envelope containing two blank cards. Ladies and gentlemen, Sidex congratulates you again. Out of your number you, the representatives of the states of the Union, are now about to elect two representatives of the Union itself. Ladies and gentlemen, you are now going to elect Miss America and Mr. America!"

He paused, waiting for an almost shriekingly excited applause to subside. "Mr. America, too?" Henry muttered, sickened. "It'll be that great big squirt from California." His nostrils widened in a sneer of pain. "All right, go ahead and marry him! You'll see someday how he turns out."

"Five minutes will now be given," Mr. Heilbrenner announced, "while you kindly write upon one card your selection for Miss America and upon the other your choice for Mr. America. Sidex officials will then pass among you, collecting the sealed envelopes containing your ballots for Miss America and Mr. America. After that, the broadcasting will begin with your all rising and singing 'America.' The result of the balloting will then be announced to you and broadcast simultaneously, after which the mayor of Boston has graciously consented to congratulate the two winners and they will be escorted to the microphone, where each will make a one-minute address to the nation." Mr. Heilbrenner placed a watch before him. "Ladies and gentlemen, you have five minutes in which to write your ballots and return them to the envelopes. Sidex thanks you."

A great buzzing filled the room. Henry, not contributing to it, removed the two cards from the envelope before him, took up the pencil, and, swallowing profoundly, slowly wrote "Miss Virginia" upon one of the cards and replaced it in the envelope. After that, he sat for some moments in studious doubt.

Certainly he didn't intend to vote for Mr. California or for any other of those show-offs. In fact, he couldn't conscientiously vote for any one of his male colleagues to be exalted as the Premier Intellectual of the whole United States. He hadn't observed greatness in any of them and didn't feel justified in contributing to an enormous reputation falsely achieved. Would the whole ballot be announced, he won-



dered, so that everybody who received even one vote would at least be mentioned? It'd be pretty ignominious for anybody not to get a single vote, especially with her sitting up there in triumph! Yes, and far, far away, out in Emmons ville, Indiana, the whole family listening in, and everybody else in Emmons ville, too, and —

Hurriedly, though using his left hand to shield the writing from the observation of his neighbors, Henry wrote his choice for Mr. America upon the second card, slid it quickly into the envelope, and sealed the envelope tightly.

The ballots were collected, taken to a table in a corner of the room, and the counting began. The mayor of Boston made his appearance upon the dais, was applauded. Excited voices filled the room with conglomerate sound until the gavel again struck the table. Mr. Heilbrenner stood with two sheets of paper in his hand.

"The ballot is concluded and the broadcast has begun," he said solemnly. "We will all now please rise and sing 'America.'"

Henry rose with the rest and sang, though his voice was heard but faintly, even by himself. What heart had he to sing? Miss Virginia was going to be elected Miss America, going to be topmost, brightest figure in all the light of fame — high, high above even the reach of his bitterness. He knew her now — at last. Of course, Miss Massachusetts had told her the secret of the surprise, and for two days Miss Virginia had been lobbying — making herself popular — yes, and making him into a mere tool to increase that popularity! Henry laughed raspingly, caring little who heard him.

On the dais the chairman's solemnity deepened. "Mr. Mayor, representatives of the states, my friends of the radio audience," he said, "Sidex announces the result of the balloting. Sidex congratulates beautiful Miss Clara Pattle Brown, Virginia's charming Sidex Intellect Prize Winner. She, as Miss Virginia, has received a total of sixty-one votes out of the ninety-six, and I do therefore now and herewith proclaim Clara Pattle Brown to be Miss America!"

Thereupon, while ardent cheers arose, the orchestra first played "Dixie" and then "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny." Henry couldn't see triumphant Clara Pattle Brown; the mayor of Boston was congratulating her; everybody at the high table had risen and rushed about her. "Look at 'em!" Henry groaned. "Didn't I tell you?"

Mr. Heilbrenner's gavel pounded upon the table again, and again silence fell. "In announcing the election of Mr. America, Sidex wishes to mention a fact that should be gratifying to all the male rep-

representatives of the states and their friends," Mr. Heilbrenner said. "Every single male representative has received at least one vote. That should please us all. Of those who have received more than two votes, Idaho has received three; Michigan, four; Ohio, four; Kentucky, seven; but the fine old state of Indiana has received the highest number, sixteen, which carries with it the election. I therefore now and herewith proclaim that Henry Hopgood Dilmer, heretofore Mr. Indiana merely, has been and is duly elected Mr. America. I appoint Miss Massachusetts and Mr. Rhode Island to escort Mr. America to the platform to receive the congratulations of the mayor of Boston and to follow Miss America in delivering a one-minute radio address to the nation. Mr. America, Sidex congratulates you! Mr. America, we all congratulate you!"

Deafeningly the orchestra played "On the Banks of the Wabash," and seldom indeed has anybody ever been paler than was Mr. America while being escorted to the platform by Miss Massachusetts and Mr. Rhode Island. Henry's ears heard the voice of the mayor of Boston congratulating him; Henry's upper chest felt the touch of Mr. Heilbrenner affixing the white ribbon upon which MR. AMERICA was printed in letters of gold; Henry's right hand felt the grasp of other hands; his eyes were aware of blushing lovely Miss America, happy beside him; but his mind had no true consciousness of any of these things.

Mr. America! Was it true? It was. Suddenly a light of incredible brightness enveloped Henry; he was dazzled by himself. Mr. America!

Miss America's little speech into the microphone was but a buzzing in his ears. "It's your turn!" Mr. Heilbrenner whispered to Mr. America urgently. "Speak up! Put your face closer to the mike. Speak up, can't you?"

"I —" Henry addressed the instrument hoarsely. "I —" he said again, and choked.

Miss America whispered in his ear, "Don't be scared. You tell 'em, hon!"

Henry told them. "I — I wish to thank," he said — "I wish to thank every citizen of the United States for this honor that — that has come upon me. I wish to thank the citizens of Emmons ville and the citizens of the nation and the mayor of Boston and all others I grew up with in high school and — and elsewhere. I will try to deserve it and I will live such a life so that I will never feel worthy of — I mean unworthy — so I will be worthy of being Mr. America. Wherever I

glow — I mean go — I hope I will always be looked upon as Mr. America."

He was removed from the microphone, though in the kindest manner, just after taking breath and saying, "I hope I — " again. "Your time's up, honey," glowing Miss America told him. "You did fine! Are you happy — Henry?"

"Henry?" he repeated, in a tone of vague inquiry.

Not otherwise did he respond to her sweet question. The orchestra was playing "The Star-Spangled Banner," and the former Mr. Indiana officially joined the mayor of Boston in trying to sing it. Henry looked upward, over the heads of the mere state representatives below him; he looked upward and sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" mainly without words, but as loudly as he could. Henry sang, and, in that supreme moment, was really unaware of Miss America's very existence.

This, of course, doesn't mean that he entirely forgot her for any considerable time, though it can't be said that during the brief remainder of his visit to Boston he became quite himself again. Only the old Indiana home could restore Henry's faculties.

On the train I was on [he wrote to her from Emmons ville] it seemed as if traveling people are not much of listeners in and a man in the diner across from me thought my badge meant advertising some show or something until I told him. Well yesterday the *Emmons ville News* had it in in "Notes about Town," but I have quit wearing the badge because I do not like to be ostentitious and I could see it was causing ill feeling among my own circle of young people.

So I have learned in this life we must expect this and since returning home I have scarcely been able to say a single thing in my own family or perform any action that I would not hear comments from the two members, one oldest and the other one next to me in age I told you about. "Oh I would not think Mr. America would say that" they keep squawking and "Oh I would not think Mr. America would do thus and so" or else "Oh only to think of somebody that had been elected Mr. America behaving in this manner" and so forth &c &c &c. It seems in this life if we receive honors outside the family circle it is certain members of our own family that it brings out the worst side of.

Well, it seems Miss Indiana and Miss Missouri were on the train in another car so I did not see them except on the platform at Indianapolis when I got off to take the bus for Emmons ville but had a short chat. They both told me it was you suggested voting for me and might not thought of it if you had not spoken to them. So I feel I ought to thank you as I might not rec'd so much a majority if you had not.

You said you were going to college next year and I would like to plan attending the same one because if we both go to some good coeducational college together they would know what it means for it having us both in it and I have gotten a feeling that every man needs the good influence of a woman and I have gotten a feeling that both of us would be a success in life wherever you are. So please write soon and say you meant what you said at the good old South Station in Boston when you said what you said because I have gotten a feeling there was a higher Fate in this whole thing and it will be better for us to make the same plans from now on. So please write soon which college because I have made up my mind nothing on earth can stop me from going any place you do.

Now it is getting late and so Mr. America will have to stop writing to Miss America. But I will always sign myself

Yours only

*Henry*

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. When did you first become aware of Miss Virginia's plot? How did the author make you feel interested in the outcome?

2. Why did Miss Virginia electioneer for Mr. Indiana? Let the boys give their opinions of Clara to the class, and the girls give theirs of Henry. Do the characters seem real, or are they caricatures?

3. Is Henry's tendency to treat with exaggerated seriousness matters which to anyone else would seem inconsequential really characteristic of immature youth? Is the trait confined to youth? Is immaturity a matter of age?

4. Do you think, as some critics have said, that Tarkington's humorous portrayals of youth are also warmly sympathetic? Is there any significance in the title?

5. What is your opinion of Miss America contests? of other radio contests? Do you think Sidex's contest did anything of value for the contestants? To what extent are Mr. and Miss America justified in being proud of their election?

6. Do you think Clara's manner of talking is an accurate representation of Virginian speech? Discuss other regional mannerisms you have heard.

7. What errors can you find in Henry's letter to Miss America?

8. Vocabulary: defectives, mollify, undulation, piquant, fatuously, morose, ineffable, sardonic, ignominious, conglomerate, ardent.

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

9. Henry made a mistake when he wrote *ostentitious* for *ostentatious* (page 24), but he was at least trying to use a very good word. You will

find it and some of its relatives used a number of times in this very book. *Ostentatious* means deliberately showy or pretentious. The noun for the quality, *ostentation*, is used of manners or behavior and of such things as dress and housefurnishings. A person may be fond of *ostentation*, or he may be offended by it. A related word is *ostensible*, which describes that which is shown — often as opposed to that which is real. A person's *ostensible* motive may not be his real motive at all.

### RICHARD CONNELL (1893- )

At an age when the other high-school boys were playing football and delivering handbills, Richard Connell was a full-fledged reporter, writing about political rallies and murder trials for his father's daily in Poughkeepsie, New York. So well did he acquire the newswriter's virtues of clarity and vividness that during the last twenty years he has sold scores of stories to national magazines of wide circulation.

### THE MOST DANGEROUS GAME

Hunter and hunted! The familiar theme has perhaps never been more thrillingly treated than in this story. Here we find conflict and suspense — plot at its most exciting best. A remote, mysterious setting; characters strange and diabolical; a match of wits for stakes of life and death — here are all the ingredients of a romantic thriller.

"OFF THERE to the right — somewhere — is a large island," said Whitney. "It's rather a mystery —"

"What island is it?" Rainsford asked.

"The old charts call it 'Ship-Trap Island,'" Whitney replied. "A suggestive name, isn't it? Sailors have a curious dread of the place. I don't know why. Some superstition —"

"Can't see it," remarked Rainsford, trying to peer through the dank tropical night that was palpable as it pressed its thick warm blackness in upon the yacht.

"You've good eyes," said Whitney, with a laugh, "and I've seen you pick off a moose moving in the brown fall bush at four hundred yards, but even you can't see four miles or so through a moonless Caribbean night."

"Nor four yards," admitted Rainsford. "Ugh! It's like moist black velvet."

"It will be light enough in Rio," promised Whitney. "We should make it in a few days. I hope the jaguar guns have come from Purdey's. We should have some good hunting up the Amazon. Great sport, hunting."

"The best sport in the world," agreed Rainsford.

"For the hunter," amended Whitney. "Not for the jaguar."

"Don't talk rot, Whitney," said Rainsford. "You're a big-game hunter, not a philosopher. Who cares how a jaguar feels?"

"Perhaps the jaguar does," observed Whitney.

"Bah! They've no understanding."

"Even so, I rather think they understand one thing — fear. The fear of pain and the fear of death."

"Nonsense," laughed Rainsford. "This hot weather is making you soft, Whitney. Be a realist. The world is made up of two classes — the hunters and the huntees. Luckily, you and I are hunters. Do you think we've passed that island yet?"

"I can't tell in the dark. I hope so."

"Why?" asked Rainsford.

"The place has a reputation — a bad one."

"Cannibals?" suggested Rainsford.

"Hardly. Even cannibals wouldn't live in such a God-forsaken place. But it's gotten into sailor lore, somehow. Didn't you notice that the crew's nerves seemed a bit jumpy today?"

"They were a bit strange, now you mention it. Even Captain Nielsen —"

"Yes, even that tough-minded old Swede, who'd go up to the devil himself and ask him for a light. Those fishy blue eyes held a look I never saw there before. All I could get out of him was 'This place has an evil name among seafaring men, sir.' Then he said to me, very gravely, 'Don't you feel anything?' — as if the air about us was actually poisonous. Now, you mustn't laugh when I tell you this — I did feel something like a sudden chill.

"There was no breeze. The sea was as flat as a plate-glass window. We were drawing near the island then. What I felt was a — a mental chill; a sort of sudden dread."

"Pure imagination," said Rainsford. "One superstitious sailor can taint the whole ship's company with his fear."

"Maybe. But sometimes I think sailors have an extra sense that tells them when they are in danger. Sometimes I think evil is a tangible thing — with wave lengths, just as sound and light have. An evil place can, so to speak, broadcast vibrations of evil. Anyhow, I'm

glad we're getting out of this zone. Well, I think I'll turn in now, Rainsford."

"I'm not sleepy," said Rainsford. "I'm going to smoke another pipe up on the afterdeck."

"Good night, then, Rainsford. See you at breakfast."

"Right. Good night, Whitney."

There was no sound in the night as Rainsford sat there but the muffled throb of the engine that drove the yacht swiftly through the darkness, and the swish and ripple of the wash of the propeller.

Rainsford, reclining in a steamer chair, indolently puffed on his favorite brier. The sensuous drowsiness of the night was on him. "It's so dark," he thought, "that I could sleep without closing my eyes; the night would be my eyelids —"

An abrupt sound startled him. Off to the right he heard it, and his ears, expert in such matters, could not be mistaken. Again he heard the sound, and again. Somewhere, off in the blackness, someone had fired a gun three times.

Rainsford sprang up and moved quickly to the rail, mystified. He strained his eyes in the direction from which the reports had come, but it was like trying to see through a blanket. He leaped upon the rail and balanced himself there, to get greater elevation; his pipe, striking a rope, was knocked from his mouth. He lunged for it; a short, hoarse cry came from his lips as he realized he had reached too far and had lost his balance. The cry was pinched off short as the blood-warm waters of the Caribbean Sea closed over his head.

He struggled up to the surface and tried to cry out, but the wash from the speeding yacht slapped him in the face and the salt water in his open mouth made him gag and strangle. Desperately he struck out with strong strokes after the receding lights of the yacht, but he stopped before he had swum fifty feet. A certain coolheadedness had come to him; it was not the first time he had been in a tight place. There was a chance that his cries could be heard by someone aboard the yacht, but that chance was slender and grew more slender as the yacht raced on. He wrestled himself out of his clothes and shouted with all his power. The lights of the yacht became faint and ever-vanishing fireflies; then they were blotted out entirely by the night.

Rainsford remembered the shots. They had come from the right, and doggedly he swam in that direction, swimming with slow, deliberate strokes, conserving his strength. For a seemingly endless time he fought the sea. He began to count his strokes; he could do possibly a hundred more and then —

Rainsford heard a sound. It came out of the darkness, a high screaming sound, the sound of an animal in an extremity of anguish and terror.

He did not recognize the animal that made the sound; he did not try to; with fresh vitality he swam toward the sound. He heard it again; then it was cut short by another noise, crisp, staccato.

"Pistol shot," muttered Rainsford, swimming on.

Ten minutes of determined effort brought another sound to his ears — the most welcome he had ever heard — the muttering and growling of the sea breaking on a rocky shore. He was almost on the rocks before he saw them: on a night less calm he would have been shattered against them. With his remaining strength he dragged himself from the swirling waters. Jagged crags appeared to jut up into the opaqueness; he forced himself upward, hand over hand. Gasping, his hands raw, he reached a flat place at the top. Dense jungle came down to the very edge of the cliffs. What perils that tangle of trees and underbrush might hold for him did not concern Rainsford just then. All he knew was that he was safe from his enemy, the sea, and that utter weariness was on him. He flung himself down at the jungle edge and tumbled headlong into the deepest sleep of his life.

When he opened his eyes he knew from the position of the sun that it was late in the afternoon. Sleep had given him new vigor; a sharp hunger was picking at him. He looked about him, almost cheerfully.

"Where there are pistol shots, there are men. Where there are men, there is food," he thought. But what kind of men, he wondered, in so forbidding a place? An unbroken front of snarled and ragged jungle fringed the shore.

He saw no sign of a trail through the closely knit web of weeds and trees; it was easier to go along the shore, and Rainsford floundered along by the water. Not far from where he landed, he stopped.

Some wounded thing — by the evidence, a large animal — had thrashed about in the underbrush; the jungle weeds were crushed down and the moss was lacerated; one patch of weeds was stained crimson. A small, glittering object not far away caught Rainsford's eye and he picked it up. It was an empty cartridge.

"A twenty-two," he remarked. "That's odd. It must have been a fairly large animal too. The hunter had his nerve with him to tackle it with a light gun. It's clear that the brute put up a fight. I suppose the first three shots I heard was when the hunter flushed his quarry and wounded it. The last shot was when he trailed it here and finished it."



He examined the ground closely and found what he had hoped to find — the print of hunting boots. They pointed along the cliff in the direction he had been going. Eagerly he hurried along, now slipping on a rotten log or a loose stone, but making headway; night was beginning to settle down on the island.

Bleak darkness was blacking out the sea and jungle when Rainsford sighted the lights. He came upon them as he turned a crook in the coast line; and his first thought was that he had come upon a village, for there were many lights. But as he forged along he saw to his great astonishment that all the lights were in one enormous building — a lofty structure with pointed towers plunging upward into the gloom. His eyes made out the shadowy outlines of a palatial château; it was set on a high bluff, and on three sides of it cliffs dived down to where the sea licked greedy lips in the shadows.

"Mirage," thought Rainsford. But it was no mirage, he found, when he opened the tall spiked iron gate. The stone steps were real enough; the massive door with a leering gargoyle for a knocker was real enough; yet above it all hung an air of unreality.

He lifted the knocker, and it creaked up stiffly, as if it had never before been used. He let it fall, and it startled him with its booming loudness. He thought he heard steps within; the door remained closed. Again Rainsford lifted the heavy knocker, and let it fall. The door opened then — opened as suddenly as if it were on a spring — and Rainsford stood blinking in the river of glaring gold light that poured out. The first thing Rainsford's eyes discerned was the largest man Rainsford had ever seen — a gigantic creature, solidly made and black-bearded to the waist. In his hand the man held a long-barreled revolver, and he was pointing it straight at Rainsford's heart.

Out of the snarl of beard two small eyes regarded Rainsford.

"Don't be alarmed," said Rainsford, with a smile which he hoped was disarming. "I'm no robber. I fell off a yacht. My name is Sanger Rainsford of New York City."

The menacing look in the eyes did not change. The revolver pointed as rigidly as if the giant were a statue. He gave no sign that he understood Rainsford's words, or that he had even heard them. He was dressed in uniform — a black uniform trimmed with gray astrakhan.

"I'm Sanger Rainsford of New York," Rainsford began again. "I fell off a yacht. I am hungry."

The man's only answer was to raise with his thumb the hammer of his revolver. Then Rainsford saw the man's free hand go to his fore-

head in a military salute, and he saw him click his heels together and stand at attention. Another man was coming down the broad marble steps, an erect, slender man in evening clothes. He advanced to Rainsford and held out his hand.

In a cultivated voice marked by a slight accent that gave it added precision and deliberateness, he said, "It is a very great pleasure and honor to welcome Mr. Sanger Rainsford, the celebrated hunter, to my home."

Automatically Rainsford shook the man's hand.

"I've read your book about hunting snow leopards in Tibet, you see," explained the man. "I am General Zaroff."

Rainsford's first impression was that the man was singularly handsome; his second was that there was an original, almost bizarre quality about the general's face. He was a tall man past middle age, for his hair was a vivid white; but his thick eyebrows and pointed military mustache were as black as the night from which Rainsford had come. His eyes, too, were black and very bright. He had high cheekbones, a sharp-cut nose, a spare, dark face — the face of a man used to giving orders, the face of an aristocrat. Turning to the giant in uniform, the general made a sign. The giant put away his pistol, saluted, withdrew.

"Ivan is an incredibly strong fellow," remarked the general, "but he has the misfortune to be deaf and dumb. A simple fellow but, I'm afraid, like all his race, a bit of a savage."

"Is he Russian?"

"He is a Cossack,"<sup>1</sup> said the general, and his smile showed red lips and pointed teeth. "So am I."

"Come," he said, "we shouldn't be chatting here. We can talk later. Now you want clothes, food, rest. You shall have them. This is a most restful spot."

Ivan had reappeared, and the general spoke to him with lips that moved but gave forth no sound.

"Follow Ivan, if you please, Mr. Rainsford," said the general. "I was about to have my dinner when you came. I'll wait for you. You'll find that my clothes will fit you, I think."

It was to a huge, beam-ceilinged bedroom with a canopied bed big enough for six men that Rainsford followed the silent giant. Ivan laid out an evening suit, and Rainsford, as he put it on, noticed that it came from a London tailor who ordinarily cut and sewed for none below the rank of duke.

The dining room to which Ivan conducted him was in many ways

<sup>1</sup> **Cossack:** member of a Russian tribe known for its fierceness.

remarkable. There was a medieval magnificence about it; it suggested a baronial hall of feudal times with its oaken panels, its high ceiling, its vast refectory tables where twoscore men could sit down to eat. About the hall were mounted heads of many animals — lions, tigers, elephants, moose, bears; larger or more perfect specimens Rainsford had never seen. At the great table the general was sitting, alone.

"You'll have a cocktail, Mr. Rainsford," he suggested. The cocktail was surpassingly good; and, Rainsford noted, the table appointments were of the finest — the linen, the crystal, the silver, the china.

They were eating *borsch*, the rich, red soup with whipped cream so dear to Russian palates. Half apologetically General Zaroff said, "We do our best to preserve the amenities of civilization here. Please forgive any lapses. We are well off the beaten track, you know. Do you think the champagne has suffered from its long ocean trip?"

"Not in the least," declared Rainsford. He was finding the general a most thoughtful and affable host, a true cosmopolite. But there was one small trait of the general's that made Rainsford uncomfortable. Whenever he looked up from his plate he found the general studying him, appraising him narrowly.

"Perhaps," said General Zaroff, "you were surprised that I recognized your name. You see, I read all books on hunting published in English, French, and Russian. I have but one passion in my life, Mr. Rainsford, and it is the hunt."

"You have some wonderful heads here," said Rainsford as he ate a particularly well-cooked *filet mignon*. "That Cape buffalo is the largest I ever saw."

"Oh, that fellow. Yes, he was a monster."

"Did he charge you?"

"Hurled me against a tree," said the general. "Fractured my skull. But I got the brute."

"I've always thought," said Rainsford, "that the Cape buffalo is the most dangerous of all big game."

For a moment the general did not reply; he was smiling his curious red-lipped smile. Then he said slowly, "No. You are wrong, sir. The Cape buffalo is not the most dangerous big game." He sipped his wine. "Here in my preserve on this island," he said in the same slow tone, "I hunt more dangerous game."

Rainsford expressed his surprise. "Is there big game on this island?"

The general nodded. "The biggest."

"Really?"

"Oh, it isn't here naturally, of course. I have to stock the island."

"What have you imported, general?" Rainsford asked. "Tigers?"

The general smiled. "No," he said. "Hunting tigers ceased to interest me some years ago. I exhausted their possibilities, you see. No thrill left in tigers, no real danger. I live for danger, Mr. Rainsford."

The general took from his pocket a gold cigarette case and offered his guest a long black cigarette with a silver tip; it was perfumed and gave off a smell like incense.

"We will have some capital hunting, you and I," said the general. "I shall be most glad to have your society."

"But what game —" began Rainsford.

"I'll tell you," said the general. "You will be amused, I know. I think I may say, in all modesty, that I have done a rare thing. I have invented a new sensation. May I pour you another glass of port?"

"Thank you, general."

The general filled both glasses, and said, "God makes some men poets. Some He makes kings, some beggars. Me He made a hunter. My hand was made for the trigger, my father said. He was a very rich man with a quarter of a million acres in the Crimea, and he was an ardent sportsman. When I was only five years old he gave me a little gun, specially made in Moscow for me, to shoot sparrows with. When I shot some of his prize turkeys with it, he did not punish me; he complimented me on my marksmanship. I killed my first bear in the Caucasus when I was ten. My whole life has been one prolonged hunt. I went into the army — it was expected of noblemen's sons — and for a time commanded a division of Cossack cavalry, but my real interest was always the hunt. I have hunted every kind of game in every land. It would be impossible for me to tell you how many animals I have killed."

The general puffed at his cigarette.

"After the debacle in Russia I left the country, for it was imprudent for an officer of the Czar to stay there. Many noble Russians lost everything. I, luckily, had invested heavily in American securities, so I shall never have to open a tearoom in Monte Carlo or drive a taxi in Paris. Naturally, I continued to hunt — grizzlies in your Rockies, crocodiles in the Ganges, rhinoceroses in East Africa. It was in Africa that the Cape buffalo hit me and laid me up for six months. As soon as I recovered I started for the Amazon to hunt

jaguars, for I had heard they were unusually cunning. They weren't." The Cossack sighed. "They were no match at all for a hunter with his wits about him, and a high-powered rifle. I was bitterly disappointed. I was lying in my tent with a splitting headache one night when a terrible thought pushed its way into my mind. Hunting was beginning to bore me! And hunting, remember, had been my life. I have heard that in America businessmen often go to pieces when they give up the business that has been their life."

"Yes, that's so," said Rainsford.

The general smiled. "I had no wish to go to pieces," he said. "I must do something. Now, mine is an analytical mind, Mr. Rainsford. Doubtless that is why I enjoy the problems of the chase."

"No doubt, General Zaroff."

"So," continued the general, "I asked myself why the hunt no longer fascinated me. You are much younger than I am, Mr. Rainsford, and have not hunted as much, but you perhaps can guess the answer."

"What was it?"

"Simply this: hunting had ceased to be what you call 'a sporting proposition.' It had become too easy. I always got my quarry. Always. There is no greater bore than perfection."

The general lit a fresh cigarette.

"No animal had a chance with me any more. That is no boast; it is a mathematical certainty. The animal had nothing but his legs and his instinct. Instinct is no match for reason. When I thought of this it was a tragic moment for me, I can tell you."

Rainsford leaned across the table, absorbed in what his host was saying.

"It came to me as an inspiration what I must do," the general went on.

"And that was?"

The general smiled the quiet smile of one who has faced an obstacle and surmounted it with success. "I had to invent a new animal to hunt," he said.

"A new animal? You're joking."

"Not at all," said the general. "I never joke about hunting. I needed a new animal. I found one. So I bought this island, built this house, and here I do my hunting. The island is perfect for my purposes — there are jungles with a maze of trails in them, hills, swamps —"

"But the animal, General Zaroff?"

"Oh," said the general, "it supplies me with the most exciting hunting in the world. No other hunting compares with it for an instant. Every day I hunt, and I never grow bored now, for I have a quarry with which I can match my wits."

Rainsford's bewilderment showed in his face.

"I wanted the ideal animal to hunt," explained the general. "So I said, 'What are the attributes of an ideal quarry?' And the answer was, of course, 'It must have courage, cunning, and, above all, it must be able to reason.'"

"But no animal can reason," objected Rainsford.

"My dear fellow," said the general, "there is one that can."

"But you can't mean —" gasped Rainsford.

"And why not?"

"I can't believe you are serious, General Zaroff. This is a grisly joke."

"Why should I not be serious? I am speaking of hunting."

"Hunting? Great Guns, General Zaroff, what you speak of is murder."

The general laughed with entire good nature. He regarded Rainsford quizzically. "I refuse to believe that so modern and civilized a young man as you seem to be harbors romantic ideas about the value of human life. Surely your experiences in the war —"

"Did not make me condone cold-blooded murder," finished Rainsford stiffly.

Laughter shook the general. "How extraordinarily droll you are!" he said. "One does not expect nowadays to find a young man of the educated class, even in America, with such a naïve, and, if I may say so, mid-Victorian point of view. It's like finding a snuffbox in a limousine. Ah, well, doubtless you had Puritan ancestors. So many Americans appear to have had. I'll wager you'll forget your notions when you go hunting with me. You've a genuine new thrill in store for you, Mr. Rainsford."

"Thank you, I'm a hunter, not a murderer."

"Dear me," said the general, quite unruffled, "again that unpleasant word. But I think I can show you that your scruples are quite ill founded."

"Yes?"

"Life is for the strong, to be lived by the strong, and, if needs be, taken by the strong. The weak of the world were put here to give the strong pleasure. I am strong. Why should I not use my gift? If I wish to hunt, why should I not? I hunt the scum of the earth:

sailors from tramp ships — lascars,<sup>1</sup> blacks, Chinese, whites, mongrels — a thoroughbred horse or hound is worth more than a score of them."

"But they are men," said Rainsford hotly.

"Precisely," said the general. "That is why I use them. It gives me pleasure. They can reason, after a fashion. So they are dangerous."

"But where do you get them?"

The general's left eyelid fluttered down in a wink. "This island is called Ship Trap," he answered. "Sometimes an angry god of the high seas sends them to me. Sometimes, when Providence is not so kind, I help Providence a bit. Come to the window with me."

Rainsford went to the window and looked out toward the sea.

"Watch! Out there!" exclaimed the general, pointing into the night. Rainsford's eyes saw only blackness, and then, as the general pressed a button, far out to sea Rainsford saw the flash of lights.

The general chuckled. "They indicate a channel," he said, "where there's none; giant rocks with razor edges crouch like a sea monster with wide-open jaws. They can crush a ship as easily as I crush this nut." He dropped a walnut on the hardwood floor and brought his heel grinding down on it. "Oh, yes," he said, casually, as if in answer to a question, "I have electricity. We try to be civilized here."

"Civilized? And you shoot down men?"

A trace of anger was in the general's black eyes, but it was there for but a second; and he said, in his most pleasant manner, "Dear me, what a righteous young man you are! I assure you I do not do the thing you suggest. That would be barbarous. I treat these visitors with every consideration. They get plenty of good food and exercise. They get into splendid physical condition. You shall see for yourself tomorrow."

"What do you mean?"

"We'll visit my training school," smiled the general. "It's in the cellar. I have about a dozen pupils down there now. They're from the Spanish bark *San Lucar* that had the bad luck to go on the rocks out there. A very inferior lot, I regret to say. Poor specimens and more accustomed to the deck than to the jungle."

He raised his hand, and Ivan, who served as waiter, brought thick Turkish coffee. Rainsford, with an effort, held his tongue in check.

"It's a game, you see," pursued the general blandly. "I suggest

<sup>1</sup> **lascars:** East Indian native sailors employed on a European vessel.

to one of them that we go hunting. I give him a supply of food and an excellent hunting knife. I give him three hours' start. I am to follow, armed only with a pistol of the smallest caliber and range. If my quarry eludes me for three whole days, he wins the game. If I find him" — the general smiled — "he loses."

"Suppose he refuses to be hunted?"

"Oh," said the general, "I give him his option, of course. He need not play that game if he doesn't wish to. If he does not wish to hunt, I turn him over to Ivan. Ivan once had the honor of serving as official knouter to the Great White Czar, and he has his own ideas of sport. Invariably, Mr. Rainsford, invariably they choose the hunt."

"And if they win?"

The smile on the general's face widened. "To date I have not lost," he said. Then he added, hastily: "I don't wish you to think me a braggart, Mr. Rainsford. Many of them afford only the most elementary sort of problem. Occasionally I strike a tartar. One almost did win. I eventually had to use the dogs."

"The dogs?"

"This way, please. I'll show you."

The general steered Rainsford to a window. The lights from the windows sent a flickering illumination that made grotesque patterns on the courtyard below, and Rainsford could see moving about there a dozen or so huge black shapes; as they turned toward him, their eyes glittered greenly.

"A rather good lot, I think," observed the general. "They are let out at seven every night. If anyone should try to get into my house — or out of it — something extremely regrettable would occur to him." He hummed a snatch of song from the *Folies Bergère*.

"And now," said the general, "I want to show you my new collection of heads. Will you come with me to the library?"

"I hope," said Rainsford, "that you will excuse me tonight, General Zaroff. I'm really not feeling well."

"Ah, indeed?" the general inquired solicitously. "Well, I suppose that's only natural, after your long swim. You need a good, restful night's sleep. Tomorrow you'll feel like a new man, I'll wager. Then we'll hunt, eh? I've one rather promising prospect —" Rainsford was hurrying from the room.

"Sorry you can't go with me tonight," called the general. "I expect rather fair sport — a big, strong, black. He looks resourceful — Well, good night, Mr. Rainsford; I hope you have a good night's rest."



The bed was good, and the pajamas of the softest silk, and he was tired in every fiber of his being, but nevertheless Rainsford could not quiet his brain with the opiate of sleep. He lay, eyes wide open. Once he thought he heard stealthy steps in the corridor outside his room. He sought to throw open the door; it would not open. He went to the window and looked out. His room was high up in one of the towers. The lights of the château were out now, and it was dark and silent; but there was a fragment of fallow moon, and by its wan light he could see, dimly, the courtyard. There, weaving in and out in the pattern of shadow, were black, noiseless forms; the hounds heard him at the window and looked up, expectantly, with their green eyes. Rainsford went back to the bed and lay down. By many methods he tried to put himself to sleep. He had achieved a doze when, just as morning began to come, he heard, far off in the jungle, the faint report of a pistol.

General Zaroff did not appear until luncheon. He was dressed faultlessly in the tweeds of a country squire. He was solicitous about the state of Rainsford's health.

"As for me," sighed the general, "I do not feel so well. I am worried, Mr. Rainsford. Last night I detected traces of my old complaint."

To Rainsford's questioning glance the general said, "Ennui. Boredom."

Then, taking a second helping of *crêpes Suzette*, the general explained: "The hunting was not good last night. The fellow lost his head. He made a straight trail that offered no problems at all. That's the trouble with these sailors; they have dull brains to begin with, and they do not know how to get about in the woods. They do excessively stupid and obvious things. It's most annoying. Will you have another glass of *Chablis*, Mr. Rainsford?"

"General," said Rainsford firmly, "I wish to leave this island at once."

The general raised his thickets of eyebrows; he seemed hurt. "But, my dear fellow," the general protested, "you've only just come. You've had no hunting —"

"I wish to go today," said Rainsford. He saw the dead black eyes of the general on him, studying him. General Zaroff's face suddenly brightened.

He filled Rainsford's glass with venerable *Chablis* from a dusty bottle.

"Tonight," said the general, "we will hunt — you and I."

Rainsford shook his head. "No, general," he said. "I will not hunt."

The general shrugged his shoulders and delicately ate a hothouse grape. "As you wish, my friend," he said. "The choice rests entirely with you. But may I not venture to suggest that you will find my idea of sport more diverting than Ivan's?"

He nodded toward the corner to where the giant stood, scowling, his thick arms crossed on his hogshead of chest.

"You don't mean —" cried Rainsford.

"My dear fellow," said the general, "have I not told you I always mean what I say about hunting? This is really an inspiration. I drink to a foeman worthy of my steel — at last." The general raised his glass, but Rainsford sat staring at him.

"You'll find this game worth playing," the general said enthusiastically. "Your brain against mine. Your woodcraft against mine. Your strength and stamina against mine. Outdoor chess! And the stake is not without value, eh?"

"And if I win —" began Rainsford huskily.

"I'll cheerfully acknowledge myself defeated if I do not find you by midnight of the third day," said General Zaroff. "My sloop will place you on the mainland near a town." The general read what Rainsford was thinking.

"Oh, you can trust me," said the Cossack. "I will give you my word as a gentleman and a sportsman. Of course you, in turn, must agree to say nothing of your visit here."

"I'll agree to nothing of the kind," said Rainsford.

"Oh," said the general, "in that case — But why discuss that now? Three days hence we can discuss it over a bottle of *Veuve Cliquot*, unless —"

The general sipped his wine.

Then a businesslike air animated him. "Ivan," he said to Rainsford, "will supply you with hunting clothes, food, a knife. I suggest you wear moccasins; they leave a poorer trail. I suggest, too, that you avoid the big swamp in the southeast corner of the island. We call it Death Swamp. There's quicksand there. One foolish fellow tried it. The deplorable part of it was that Lazarus followed him. You can imagine my feelings, Mr. Rainsford. I loved Lazarus; he was the finest hound in my pack. Well, I must beg you to excuse me now. I always take a siesta after lunch. You'll hardly have time for a nap, I fear. You'll want to start, no doubt. I shall not follow till dusk. Hunting at night is so much more exciting than by day,

don't you think? Au revoir, Mr. Rainsford, au revoir." General Zaroff, with a deep, courtly bow, strolled from the room.

From another door came Ivan. Under one arm he carried khaki hunting clothes, a haversack of food, a leather sheath containing a long-bladed hunting knife; his right hand rested on a cocked revolver thrust in the crimson sash about his waist.

Rainsford had fought his way through the bush for two hours. "I must keep my nerve. I must keep my nerve," he said through tight teeth.

He had not been entirely clearheaded when the château gates snapped shut behind him. His whole idea at first was to put distance between himself and General Zaroff; and, to this end, he had plunged along, spurred on by the sharp rowels of something very like panic. Now he had got a grip on himself, had stopped, and was taking stock of himself and the situation. He saw that straight flight was futile; inevitably it would bring him face to face with the sea. He was in a picture with a frame of water, and his operations, clearly, must take place within that frame.

"I'll give him a trail to follow," muttered Rainsford, and he struck off from the rude path he had been following into the trackless wilderness. He executed a series of intricate loops; he doubled on his trail again and again, recalling all the lore of the fox hunt, and all the dodges of the fox. Night found him leg-weary, with hands and face lashed by the branches, on a thickly wooded ridge. He knew it would be insane to blunder on through the dark, even if he had the strength. His need for rest was imperative and he thought, "I have played the fox, now I must play the cat of the fable." A big tree with a thick trunk and outspread branches was near by, and, taking care to leave not the slightest mark, he climbed up into the crotch, and, stretching out on one of the broad limbs, after a fashion, rested. Rest brought him new confidence and almost a feeling of security. Even so zealous a hunter as General Zaroff could not trace him there, he told himself; only the devil himself could follow that complicated trail through the jungle after dark. But perhaps the general was a devil—

An apprehensive night crawled slowly by like a wounded snake and sleep did not visit Rainsford, although the silence of a dead world was on the jungle. Toward morning when a dingy gray was varnishing the sky, the cry of some startled bird focused Rainsford's attention in that direction. Something was coming through the bush, coming slowly, carefully, coming by the same winding way Rainsford had come. He flattened himself down on the limb and, through a screen

of leaves almost as thick as tapestry, he watched. . . . That which was approaching was a man.

It was General Zaroff. He made his way along with his eyes fixed in utmost concentration on the ground before him. He paused, almost beneath the tree, dropped to his knees and studied the ground. Rainsford's impulse was to hurl himself down like a panther, but he saw that the general's right hand held something metallic — a small automatic pistol.

The hunter shook his head several times, as if he were puzzled. Then he straightened up and took from his case one of his black cigarettes; its pungent incenselike smoke floated up to Rainsford's nostrils.

Rainsford held his breath. The general's eyes had left the ground and were traveling inch by inch up the tree. Rainsford froze there, every muscle tensed for a spring. But the sharp eyes of the hunter stopped before they reached the limb where Rainsford lay; a smile spread over his brown face. Very deliberately he blew a smoke ring into the air; then he turned his back on the tree and walked carelessly away, back along the trail he had come. The swish of the underbrush against his hunting boots grew fainter and fainter.

The pent-up air burst hotly from Rainsford's lungs. His first thought made him feel sick and numb. The general could follow a trail through the woods at night; he could follow an extremely difficult trail; he must have uncanny powers; only by the merest chance had the Cossack failed to see his quarry.

Rainsford's second thought was even more terrible. It sent a shudder of cold horror through his whole being. Why had the general smiled? Why had he turned back?

Rainsford did not want to believe what his reason told him was true, but the truth was as evident as the sun that had by now pushed through the morning mists. The general was playing with him! The general was saving him for another day's sport! The Cossack was the cat; he was the mouse. Then it was that Rainsford knew the full meaning of terror.

"I will not lose my nerve. I will not."

He slid down from the tree, and struck off again into the woods. His face was set and he forced the machinery of his mind to function. Three hundred yards from his hiding place he stopped where a huge dead tree leaned precariously on a smaller, living one. Throwing off his sack of food, Rainsford took his knife from its sheath and began to work with all his energy.

The job was finished at last, and he threw himself down behind a

fallen log a hundred feet away. He did not have to wait long. The cat was coming again to play with the mouse.

Following the trail with the sureness of a bloodhound came General Zaroff. Nothing escaped those searching black eyes, no crushed blade of grass, no bent twig, no mark, no matter how faint, in the moss. So intent was the Cossack on his stalking that he was upon the thing Rainsford had made before he saw it. His foot touched the protruding bough that was the trigger. Even as he touched it, the general sensed his danger and leaped back with the agility of an ape. But he was not quite quick enough; the dead tree, delicately adjusted to rest on the cut living one, crashed down and struck the general a glancing blow on the shoulder as it fell; but for his alertness, he must have been smashed beneath it. He staggered, but he did not fall; nor did he drop his revolver. He stood there, rubbing his injured shoulder, and Rainsford, with fear again gripping his heart, heard the general's mocking laugh ring through the jungle.

"Rainsford," called the general, "if you are within sound of my voice, as I suppose you are, let me congratulate you. Not many men know how to make a Malay man-catcher. Luckily for me I, too, have hunted in Malacca. You are proving interesting, Mr. Rainsford. I am going now to have my wound dressed; it's only a slight one. But I shall be back. I shall be back."

When the general, nursing his bruised shoulder, had gone, Rainsford took up his flight again. It was flight now, a desperate, hopeless flight, that carried him on for some hours. Dusk came, then darkness, and still he pressed on. The ground grew softer under his mocasins; the vegetation grew ranker, denser; insects bit him savagely. Then, as he stepped forward, his foot sank into the ooze. He tried to wrench it back, but the muck sucked viciously at his foot as if it were a giant leech. With a violent effort, he tore his feet loose. He knew where he was now. Death Swamp and its quicksand.

His hands were tight closed as if his nerve were something tangible that someone in the darkness was trying to tear from his grip. The softness of the earth had given him an idea. He stepped back from the quicksand a dozen feet or so and, like some huge prehistoric beaver, he began to dig.

Rainsford had dug himself in in France when a second's delay meant death. That had been a placid pastime compared to his digging now. The pit grew deeper; when it was above his shoulders, he climbed out and from some hard saplings cut stakes and sharpened them to a fine point. These stakes he planted in the bottom of the

pit with the points sticking up. With flying fingers he wove a rough carpet of weeds and branches and with it he covered the mouth of the pit. Then, wet with sweat and aching with tiredness, he crouched behind the stump of a lightning-charred tree.

He knew his pursuer was coming; he heard the padding sound of feet on the soft earth, and the night breeze brought him the perfume of the general's cigarette. It seemed to Rainsford that the general was coming with unusual swiftness; he was not feeling his way along, foot by foot. Rainsford, crouching there, could not see the general, nor could he see the pit. He lived a year in a minute. Then he felt an impulse to cry aloud with joy, for he heard the sharp crackle of the breaking branches as the cover of the pit gave way; he heard the sharp scream of pain as the pointed stakes found their mark. He leaped up from his place of concealment. Then he cowered back. Three feet from the pit a man was standing, with an electric torch in his hand.

"You've done well, Rainsford," the voice of the general called. "Your Burmese tiger pit has claimed one of my best dogs. Again you score. I think, Mr. Rainsford, I'll see what you can do against my whole pack. I'm going home for a rest now. Thank you for a most amusing evening."

At daybreak Rainsford, lying near the swamp, was awakened by a sound that made him know that he had new things to learn about fear. It was a distant sound, faint and wavering, but he knew it. It was the baying of a pack of hounds.

Rainsford knew he could do one of two things. He could stay where he was and wait. That was suicide. He could flee. That was postponing the inevitable. For a moment he stood there, thinking. An idea that held a wild chance came to him, and, tightening his belt, he headed away from the swamp.

The baying of the hounds drew nearer, then still nearer, nearer, ever nearer. On a ridge Rainsford climbed a tree. Down a water-course, not a quarter of a mile away, he could see the bush moving. Straining his eyes, he saw the lean figure of General Zaroff; just ahead of him Rainsford made out another figure whose wide shoulders surged through the tall jungle weeds; it was the giant Ivan, and he seemed pulled forward by some unseen force; Rainsford knew that Ivan must be holding the pack in leash.

They would be on him any minute now. His mind worked frantically. He thought of a native trick he had learned in Uganda. He slid down the tree. He caught hold of a springy young sapling and to

it he fastened his hunting knife, with the blade pointing down the trail; with a bit of wild grapevine he tied back the sapling. Then he ran for his life. The hounds raised their voices as they hit the fresh scent. Rainsford knew now how an animal at bay feels.

He had to stop to get his breath. The baying of the hounds stopped abruptly, and Rainsford's heart stopped too. They must have reached the knife.

He shinned excitedly up a tree and looked back. His pursuers had stopped. But the hope that was in Rainsford's brain when he climbed died, for he saw in the shallow valley that General Zaroff was still on his feet. But Ivan was not. The knife, driven by the recoil of the springing tree, had not wholly failed.

Rainsford had hardly tumbled to the ground when the pack took up the cry again.

"Nerve, nerve, nerve!" he panted, as he dashed along. A blue gap showed between the trees dead ahead. Ever nearer drew the hounds. Rainsford forced himself on toward that gap. He reached it. It was the shore of the sea. Across a cove he could see the gloomy gray stone of the château. Twenty feet below him the sea rumbled and hissed. Rainsford hesitated. He heard the hounds. Then he leaped far out into the sea. . . .

When the general and his pack reached the place by the sea, the Cossack stopped. For some minutes he stood regarding the blue-green expanse of water. He shrugged his shoulders. Then he sat down, took a drink of brandy from a silver flask, lit a cigarette, and hummed a bit from *Madame Butterfly*.

General Zaroff had an exceedingly good dinner in his great paneled dining hall that evening. With it he had a bottle of *Pol Roger* and half a bottle of *Chambertin*. Two slight annoyances kept him from perfect enjoyment. One was the thought that it would be difficult to replace Ivan; the other was that his quarry had escaped him; of course, the American hadn't played the game — so thought the general as he tasted his after-dinner liqueur. In his library he read, to soothe himself, from the works of Marcus Aurelius. At ten he went up to his bedroom. He was deliciously tired, he said to himself, as he locked himself in. There was a little moonlight, so, before turning on his light, he went to the window and looked down at the courtyard. He could see the great hounds, and he called, "Better luck another time," to them. Then he switched on the light.

A man, who had been hiding in the curtains of the bed, was standing there.

"Rainsford!" screamed the general. "How in God's name did you get here?"

"Swam," said Rainsford. "I found it quicker than walking through the jungle."

The general sucked in his breath and smiled. "I congratulate you," he said. "You have won the game."

Rainsford did not smile. "I am still a beast at bay," he said, in a low, hoarse voice. "Get ready, General Zaroff."

The general made one of his deepest bows. "I see," he said. "Splendid! One of us is to furnish a repast for the hounds. The other will sleep in this very excellent bed. On guard, Rainsford." . . .

He had never slept in a better bed, Rainsford decided.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the double meaning of the title?
2. How many times before the end of this story does the author bring the struggle to a critical point?
3. Do you like the way the story ends? Why?
4. Why is the scene on the yacht an effective introduction?
5. In what way are Ivan and the general alike? in what way different? What is the purpose of this contrast?
6. Describe tricks of hunting and trapping you know or have heard about.
7. Vocabulary: sensuousness, bizarre, baronial, refectory, amenities, cosmopolite, appraising, debacle, condone, naïve, tartar.

#### For Your Vocabulary

8. Connell uses in this story some excellent words dealing with reality as reported to us by our senses. When he says that the dark tropic night was *palpable* (page 26) and that evil is a *tangible* (page 27) thing, he is exaggerating, for these words literally mean capable of being felt or touched. But both words are used frequently in this figurative sense of seeming to be so real as to be "touchable." *Palpable* is also used figuratively to describe anything that is obvious, as a *palpable* lie. The negative forms, *impalpable* and *intangible*, show a slight difference in meaning; for what is *intangible* cannot be touched, but what is *impalpable* cannot be felt even if it is touched. A wisp of smoke, for instance, may be *tangible*, but it is *impalpable*. Two interesting words deal with the sense of sight, *opaque-ness* (page 29) and *mirage* (page 30). Anything is *opaque* through which light cannot pass, or into which we cannot see. But a *mirage* is a trick played upon the sense of sight, a reflection that looks real but is not.



## *The Development of Fiction in America*

ALTHOUGH English settlements in America date from 1607, when Captain John Smith founded Jamestown, Virginia, no fiction writer of genuine importance appeared in America before 1800. For two centuries the American colonists were too busy conquering the wilderness and founding a new nation to have much time for such luxuries as art, music, and literature. Moreover, the Puritan in the North distrusted fiction as a form of worldly amusement of no value in the formation of Christian character. Certain English novelists who flourished in the late eighteenth century found some readers in America, but — with one possible exception — no native writer achieved a reputation of any consequence. The exception is Charles Brockden Brown (1771–1810), generally considered the first American novelist; but even his best book, *Wieland*, is no longer read. In general, the American fiction written before 1800 is negligible.

By 1800 America had become a nation; she felt pride in her past, confidence in her future, the thrill of national unity — emotions which are fertile soil for the growth of a national literature. Having achieved her political freedom, she was now ready for a declaration of literary independence. No longer did writers feel compelled to write on European themes, aping European models. Turning to the American scene for material, Washington Irving (1783–1859) and James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) wrote stories which made them internationally famous in their own lifetimes. Before “Rip Van Winkle” and *The Spy* appeared, one might have asked, as did a famous English wit, “Who reads an American book?” But after these distinguished stories had achieved popularity, such a question became ridiculous.

Washington Irving — the first American short-story writer. The first important American short story is Washington Irving’s “Rip Van Winkle,” published in *The Sketch Book* in 1819. “Rip Van Winkle,” “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow,” and the delightful Moorish legends of *The Alhambra* remain as readable today as they were when Irving first published them. Originality, a distinctive prose style, a pervading humor, and a sure sense of romantic entertainment — these are the qualities which have made Irving’s stories live for a century. The reader who is to get the greatest enjoy-

ment from Irving must appreciate especially the mastery of beautiful prose which this first American short-story writer learned from the great English stylists of the eighteenth century.

**James Fenimore Cooper** — our first important novelist. During the romantic early years of the nineteenth century James Fenimore Cooper became our first important novelist. He wrote several books about the sea, among them *The Pilot* and *The Red Rover*, but his reputation rests primarily upon the five romantic adventure novels about the early American frontier which compose the famous Leatherstocking series. The hero of these novels, Natty Bumppo, also known as Deerslayer and Hawkeye, has been called "the most universally known character of all fiction written in English, with the possible exception of Sherlock Holmes."

**William Gilmore Simms** — the romancer of the South. William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870) is a third writer of fiction who popularized American themes. Inspired by Irving and Cooper to work exclusively in native American materials, Simms achieved noteworthy success, particularly with his novels of the Revolution. Among his most interesting books are *The Yemassee*, a story of the warfare between the early colonists and the Indians, and *The Partisan*, perhaps the best of his romances of Revolutionary days.

**Gradual change in American fiction.** Though Irving's tales are delightful and though the novels of Cooper and Simms are excellent when measured against the best work of their day, yet they lack some of the elements we are accustomed to find in modern fiction. Other writers have developed and improved upon the technique of these pioneers. Hawthorne wrote with more serious purpose, showing a deeper insight into the human spirit. Poe developed and applied a set of rules which brought the American short story to a position of pre-eminence in world literature. Others perfected the surprise ending or filled their stories with "local color." For Irving's urbane wit certain later authors often substituted a vigorous, unrestrained Western humor, less refined but more truly American. Finally, many writers turned from the romantic exaggerations and the leisurely prose of Cooper and Simms to realism and a snappy journalistic style, better adapted to the spirit and tempo of modern life.

Before the War between the States broke out in 1861, three really first-rate figures in American fiction had appeared: Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849), and Herman Melville (1819-1891).

**Hawthorne and the New England influence.** Hawthorne of-

fered in his stories a deep spiritual insight, and a concern with the moral significance of life that is lacking in the stories of Irving or Cooper. Hawthorne lifted the story above the plane of mere entertainment and made of it an artistic vehicle for the teaching of profound truths concerning man's spiritual and moral nature. His artistry won immediate recognition even from Poe, who cared nothing for the moral truths involved. His novels, which display the same artistic craftsmanship and psychological insight as his shorter works, are only four in number. Of these *The Scarlet Letter* and *The House of the Seven Gables* are the most famous; the former is considered by many the greatest American novel.

To understand Hawthorne we have to know something of the New England of Hawthorne's day. The austere tradition of the Puritan frowned upon fiction written, like Irving's, merely for enjoyment and approved only those writings which definitely served to point morals or strengthen character. The good influence of such stories as "The Great Stone Face" was so apparent that it silenced the objections of any who still looked upon "made-up" stories as something of "the world, the flesh, and the devil."

**Poe's Analysis of the short story.** When in 1842 Hawthorne published eighteen of his stories in a volume under the title of *Twice-Told Tales*, a young Virginian, Edgar Allan Poe, reviewed the book in what is probably the most important bit of writing in the history of the short story as a literary form. Poe recognized Hawthorne's genius and, using Hawthorne's stories as models, tried to define just how the short story should be written. The skillful literary artist, Poe said, does not "fashion his thoughts to accommodate his incidents" but deliberately conceives "a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out" and "then combines such incidents as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect." This emphasis upon a single effect gave the short story separate and independent identity and remains the chief structural difference between the short story and the novel.

**The far-reaching effects of Poe's criticism and tales.** Having perceived the essence of the short story, Poe consciously undertook the task of making his own stories perfect in the new form. Scorning Hawthorne's concern with moral lessons, Poe championed the doctrine of "art for art's sake"; to him the story was an end in itself, requiring no justification other than its own artistry. He took the greatest pains to produce the single effect he had decided upon, be it horror, beauty, or mystery; whether or not his writing strength-

ened the spiritual or moral fiber of his reader did not concern him. When you have finished a story by Poe, it is enough if you are able to say, "I have never read anything so horrible" — or "so hauntingly beautiful." To Poe that meant success. For many years the American public was unable to understand or appreciate Poe; but European critics, not under the influence of the American Puritan heritage, accepted him as a master at once, and European writers immediately began to imitate him.

Poe's analytical mind created the detective story — not the crime story, but the story that starts with a problem and interests the reader in the process of thought by which the detective solves the mystery. "Tales of ratiocination" Poe called his detective stories. "The Purloined Letter" and "The Gold Bug" are the most famous. In these stories Poe again demonstrates clearly that his attitude toward his material is scientific, analytic, coldly and deliberately intellectual.

**Melville, a neglected genius.** Herman Melville's most important book, *Moby Dick*, the saga of the white whale, is not only a vivid picture of the whaling industry painted on a vast canvas but an allegorical presentation of man's struggle with nature and his own soul. Although it was shamefully neglected until the twentieth century, today critics acclaim it a masterpiece. *Typee* and *Omoo* and his few short stories are also read today with appreciation.

**Minor writers, 1850-1870.** The twenty years between 1850 and 1870 failed to produce an American fiction writer worthy to be placed beside Hawthorne, Poe, and Melville. Two early novels deserve mention because of their far-reaching social consequence, although they both lack real literary merit. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852) was a powerful factor in crystallizing sentiment against slavery, and T. S. Arthur's *Ten Nights in a Bar Room* (1855) was the greatest tract of the temperance movement. Both of these novels were turned into plays which enjoyed widespread popularity and even today are sometimes revived, generally in a satiric manner. Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909) had one flash of greatness in his famous patriotic story, "The Man without a Country," which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* as a call to arms during the War between the States. But all the writers of this period fell short of the earlier masters, and the next great names in the history of American fiction come in the seventies.

**Bret Harte's introduction of "local color."** In 1870 a new landmark was placed along the path of the developing short story

when Francis Bret Harte (1836-1902) published his volume *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Sketches*. Harte immediately took the center of the literary stage in America despite the obvious defects of some of his stories. The worst of the defects is a melodramatic treatment which gives a somewhat false impression of the early West. His narratives owed their success to his lavish use of "local color." This may be defined as the careful attention to details of the physical scene and to those mannerisms in speech, dress, or behavior peculiar to a geographical locality. Harte's stories contain few well-drawn characters or original plots; but they do convey the romantic background of the gold fields of the 1850's, when California was rich in picturesque forty-niners, highwaymen, gamblers, frontier heroes, and crude frontier humor.

Bret Harte's success in the use of local color encouraged many imitators. George Washington Cable (1844-1925) portrayed the old Creole days of New Orleans; Sarah Orne Jewett (1849-1909) recorded the romance of the commonplace in New England life; James Lane Allen (1849-1925) depicted the glamour of old Kentucky; Thomas Nelson Page (1853-1922) turned back to the aristocracy of antebellum days in old Virginia. Like Bret Harte, these writers overplayed romance and sentiment. In this respect they differ sharply from those later writers who have presented local color in terms of that strict adherence to actual conditions which we call "realism."

The popularity of Bret Harte's local-color stories created a vogue for the frontier novel picturing strong personalities against a background of primitive society and physical hardship. Three notable milestones on the long road of the frontier novel are Edward Eggleston's *The Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1871), Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902), and O. E. Rolvaag's *Giants in the Earth* (1927).

**Western humor.** Besides establishing the localized romance, Harte introduced into the short story a new Western humor which greatly aided in making him popular. For years his name was coupled with that of his contemporary, Samuel Langhorne Clemens, "Mark Twain" (1835-1910), whose sense of humor made the most of the awkward age of a growing nation. With the publication of *The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County, and Other Sketches*, Mark Twain had started on the career which was to establish him as the greatest American humorist. In *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, the epic of the Mississippi vagabond, the American humorous novel reaches its highest point. The hearty, broad, frontier humor of

Harte and Clemens remains an important ingredient of American fiction.

**The surprise ending.** Vivid and vigorous as was the humor of Mark Twain and Bret Harte, it was often crude and unrestrained; and a group of Eastern writers, rather than these Westerners, kept alive the subtlety of Irving. Thomas Bailey Aldrich (1836-1907), Francis Richard Stockton (1834-1902), and Henry Cuyler Bunner (1855-1896), contemporaries of Harte and Mark Twain, carried on the Eastern tradition, and added to it in their own manner.

Aldrich was a disciple of Poe in that to him the manner in which the story was told seemed more important than the matter. To Poe's art he added a wholesomeness and a whimsical wit that make his work more amiable than that of his master. Aldrich's peculiar contribution to the development of the short-story form is the surprise ending. His most famous piece of writing, "Marjorie Daw" (1873), caused a stir in American literary circles and a revival of interest in the short-story form.

Another sensation was created by Stockton's "The Lady or the Tiger?" Like Aldrich, Stockton was a humorist, a thorough artist in technique, and a master of the surprise ending. It was especially characteristic of him that he could write plausibly of the most complete absurdities. From his skillful pen came tall tales of a ship that could not sink, a ghost that was haunted, and of "negative gravity."

H. C. Bunner, editor of *Puck*, a famous old-time American humorous weekly, also contrived sparkingly clever stories that were rich in subtle humor. Aldrich, Stockton, and Bunner popularized qualities which have since been widely imitated — clever construction, subtle humor, and a delicately light manner.

**The realism of William Dean Howells and Henry James.** In contrast with the romantic tales of Poe, Hawthorne, and Bret Harte, the fiction of the last quarter of the nineteenth century turned realistic and has remained predominantly so ever since. The two leaders in this movement were William Dean Howells (1837-1920) and Henry James (1843-1916).

Howells did his chief work in the novel, but his influence extended to the drama and the short story. With conscious deliberation he set out to portray those elements in American life which are typical rather than extraordinary, to show real situations and everyday people in their true light, not to color or escape from life by romantic exaggerations or by false sentimentalizing. In his finest novels, *A Modern Instance* (1882) and *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1885),

Howells portrayed typical life situations of the upper middle classes. *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, a study of the newly rich, heralded the many novels reflecting the industrial development of our country.

Henry James found his chief interest in a development of psychological realism. He pictured the American abroad, contrasting the attitudes and standards of the Old World and the New. By emphasizing the subtle mental processes of highly cultured people, he gave impetus to the psychological novel. Many of the methods he originated have been wisely adopted by modern writers; however, because of an oversubtle analysis, his books have never had a wide appeal.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century American writers of the local-color story turned from the romantic exaggerations of Harte, Cable, Jewett, and Page to an attempt to portray life as it really is. They followed William Dean Howells in trying to make their stories true to the standards of realism. Among these, Hamlin Garland (1860-1940) won a high place by his stories of farm life in the Middle West; and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman (1862-1930) achieved distinction among a number of writers who attempted a realistic portrayal of life in New England.

In the last decade of the century several authors turned from William Dean Howells's dictum that "the smiling aspects of life are the most American" and insisted upon presenting pictures of the disagreeable, sordid, brutal phases of life. These writers are sometimes called "naturalists" because they, like the Frenchman Zola, the father of naturalism, broke down the restraints and taboos which formerly existed and began to write about the ugly and the vicious. Among these early American naturalists, Stephen Crane (1871-1900) is probably the greatest.

At the turn of the century, perhaps in reaction to too much realism, there was a great vogue for historical novels, among which Winston Churchill's *Richard Carvel* and *The Crisis* are noteworthy. Romantic as are these stories when compared with more recent historical novels, they are considerably more true to life than the adventurous romances of Cooper and Simms.

O. Henry, master of journalistic style. Side by side with the growing realism of the nineties appeared another characteristic of the modern story, the so-called "journalistic" style. This was fostered by the rapidly increasing cheap magazines and the syndication of stories by daily newspapers. It is the reporter's manner of exploiting novelty and implying personal experience in the writer. Designed for a large, nonliterary audience, it employs, typically, somewhat sim-

plified vocabulary and sentence structure. Its conciseness and directness are often in marked contrast to the more elegant, leisurely prose of previous generations. Jack London, whose writings are a high type of journalism, described it as "concrete, to the point, with snap and go and life, crisp and crackling and interesting." The style of Richard Harding Davis (1864-1916) in his well-known story "Gallegher" is another good example. Unquestionably the greatest of the journalistic school of short-story writers was William Sydney Porter (1867-1910) who, under the pen name of O. Henry, won a place among the most important figures in the development of the American short story. And nothing has so established the fact of his genius as the failure of his numerous imitators to analyze his style or match him.

**Frank questioning by contemporary writers.** In recent years the most obvious development in American fiction is found in the critical attitude of authors toward various unpleasant phases of American life. Today the most important American short stories and novels are the product of young Americans examining their environment more closely, more challengingly — and with more brutal frankness — than ever before.

The World War of 1914-18 and the succeeding depression and disillusionment destroyed complacency and caused writers to challenge the fundamental institutions of typical American life and the philosophy of the typical man and woman. Distinguished among these writers is Sinclair Lewis (1885- ), who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1930 for his powerful satires, *Main Street* (1922) and *Arrowsmith* (1925). A fearless and courageous writer, who won the Nobel Prize for 1938, is Pearl S. Buck (1892- ), the daughter of a missionary to China, whose trilogy, *House of Earth*, is a masterful picture of life among the peasants of northern China, written with much the same critical attitude that our younger writers are applying to the American scene. Other important writers showing the same tendencies are Theodore Dreiser (1871- ), Sherwood Anderson (1876- ), Ruth Suckow (1892- ), Ernest Hemingway (1898- ), and John Steinbeck (1902- ).

**"Formlessness" in the contemporary short story.** The attempts of our most recent short-story writers to portray life honestly and fearlessly have made a radical change in the form of modern short stories — and novels, too. Just as the modern poet, by turning to "free verse," has liberated himself from many restrictions of established poetic forms, so the modern short-story writer has refused any



longer to be hampered by the standard requirements of plot and short-story technique. "If you feel the significance of life, the design builds itself," says John Steuart Curry about painting. The famous architect Frank Lloyd Wright says that the outside of the house should not be created in a pleasing design and then the inside accommodated to this pattern. Rather, Mr. Wright believes, the function for which the house is intended should dictate the plan for the interior; and the exterior must then be accepted as it turns out to be, even if it does look unconventional or even formless. So it is with such modern writers as George Milburn, William Saroyan, Manuel Komroff, and Jesse Stuart. In their stories life and truth are important; conventional form and standard plot are often lacking. Critics may decry the resulting "formlessness"; but, if emphasis on living truth is more important than conformity to literary pattern, the short story has gained, rather than lost, through the courageousness of modern writers in allowing the content of the story to determine its form.

**Great variety in modern fiction.** In the tremendous output of novels and short stories at the present time, it is interesting to see how persistent are the different types and the different elements mentioned in this brief history. On the lists of the best sellers in recent years may be found side by side exciting adventures on the high seas and studies of middle-class family circles, pioneer life with its hardships and intellectual life with its subtleties, naturalistic pictures of war or slum life and the aspirations of sensitive souls. Some of these will undoubtedly be perpetuated as vital books in the history of our literature. Opinion has never yet been able to agree on the one "great American novel." Perhaps our national life and interests are too complex to find expression in any one book, and the "great American novel" will turn out to be a bookshelf rather than a single volume.

## *Guide to Short Stories*

AN AMERICAN first defined the short story, Americans first developed it into a popular favorite, and Americans still read thousands of short stories every month. When you pick up a magazine, whether it is a slick-paper journal for the sophisticates or one of the unpretentious but swarming pulps, the chances are strong that short stories will be one of its important features. If you can learn to distinguish the good stories from the poorer ones, and if you can develop a preference for the better ones, you will increase the dividends on many an hour of your leisure reading for years to come.

**Central impression.** What makes a short story good? Fortunately for the amateur critic, the starting point for study of the short story is simply the main interest of the story. The one all-important requirement, first recognized by Edgar Allan Poe, is that the story must give one central impression. All the parts of the story — the familiar narrative elements of action, character, and setting — must be skillfully combined to give a single effect. The satisfying sense of completeness thus achieved is the great charm of the short story. We read for the story, but it is the central effect that makes the story impressive.

In any collection of short stories we find a great variety of central impressions. A writer may want to create a mood; or he may want to illustrate some idea about life and human nature; or, as in mystery and detective stories, so popular just now, he may make the chief interest the intellectual one of unraveling the plot. Hawthorne usually concentrated on presenting a serious truth about character or destiny. Poe sometimes sought to arouse his reader's emotions, often by the fascination of horror; and sometimes he wrote detective stories to puzzle the mind. Stories in which mood is the thing — such as humorous stories, adventure stories, and horror and ghost stories — may have no underlying idea about life, since they deal with unusual happenings, not typical ones. Often both thought and mood are strong in a story; but they must be harmonious, so that the central impression is strengthened and not divided. Unfortunately some modern magazine publishers demand that stories be padded in order to be continued among the advertisements from which the real income of the magazines is derived. Consequently many of our modern stories are

spoiled by rambling digressions, "talkiness," and the resulting confusion of impressions. In our better magazines, where literary quality is more important than revenue from advertising, the stories are technically sound, each making one definite point, one single impression.

As soon as you have finished reading a story, while the details are still clear in your mind, examine the total impression it has made on you and try to reduce that impression to a clear statement, such as "This revenge was horrible"; "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence"; or "This practical joke backfired on the joker with comic effect." If the story has achieved artistic unity, the central impression will stand out clearly. And all the details of action, character, and setting will contribute to the single effect; there will be no padding, no "talky" digressions.

**Action.** In his handling of action the author is greatly influenced by his main purpose. He chooses and arranges the happenings of the story so as to bring out most effectively the central impression he wishes to leave in the mind of the reader. If he wishes to present some truth about real life, he chooses incidents that are typical and presents them so that they are convincingly realistic. In particular, the ending of a realistic story must seem probable, the outcome logically expected from the earlier happenings and the sort of people involved in them. But if the author is amusing you with a humorous tale or entertaining you with exciting adventure, he can present odd and unexpected happenings without in the least damaging his central effect. It is only the realistic stories that are open to criticism if the incidents are improbable.

But, whether the story is realistic or romantic the reader must be convinced (for the time being at least) that the happenings are real. This quality of seeming real we call "verisimilitude." While you are reading, it may be a matter of small importance whether the happenings are probable or not; if they seem real to you, they will hold you absorbed. Various methods serve to achieve verisimilitude. Sometimes not the plot itself but the skillful handling of the other interwoven parts, character and setting, builds up the feeling of reality. But always the author's best means is to write narrative so vividly that you feel the motives which impel the characters to action and you actually see and hear those happenings.

Every story must have action, but in most stories the action is more than just a series of incidents; it takes the form of a *plot*. The basis of the plot is a struggle or conflict, with the opposing forces so evenly

balanced that there is real doubt about the outcome. The struggle need not be a physical one. The forces pitted against each other may be mental or spiritual. Many of our best stories are purely psychological; that is, important "events" in the story are changes of mind or attitude on the part of the characters. But the struggle, whether mental or physical, carries us on through the story; and when the struggle is over, the story must end and end quickly. The turning point in the plot, at which you first foresee the ending, is called the *climax*; and the late climax is one of the marked characteristics of the short story.

Above everything else, a plot must have *suspense*. Suspense is a combination of two elements, uncertainty as to the outcome of the struggle and strong interest in that outcome. If you feel too sure of the way the story will end or if you do not much care how it will end, suspense is greatly weakened if not lost. So the writer must balance the opposing forces to keep the outcome uncertain, and he must stir your interest so that the outcome holds your attention.

In evaluating the author's handling of action ask yourself these questions: Do the incidents all contribute to the central impression? Is the ending logical? Do the happenings seem vivid and real while you are reading them? Is there a real plot? (If so, what are the two opposing forces?) Is the suspense well handled? When your answers to these questions are in general negative, the story is weak in the handling of action and plot. It may be, however, that the story has merit because of the author's treatment of the two other major elements of a story, character and setting.

**Characters.** In portrayal of characters, as in the handling of action, a good writer is strongly influenced by the central impression he wishes to make. If the author wishes the main idea of his story to center on a character, he will subordinate action and setting and make his story primarily a character sketch. If his purpose is merely to entertain, he may concentrate on humorous or exciting action and scarcely develop the characters at all. If the central impression is a general truth about life, the author will select representative people rather than marked individuals, just as he selects happenings which frequently occur; in this case, he will bring to our attention only those traits and qualities of his characters which are typical of the class each character represents.

Since the short story must remain short, descriptions of characters cannot be long. The sentence or two that can be spared to present a character must be keenly illuminating. A gifted writer can often

sketch his characters by presenting them in action, so that the story goes forward while the reader is forming his impression, just as he does of people about him in real life, by observing what they say and do. Whatever method is used, the characters must seem real; you must feel, as you read, that they are living people.

Though the writer must limit severely the space he devotes to portraying his characters, the writers who command our most serious attention are those whose skillful presentation of characters and penetrating analysis of their motives and reactions increase our knowledge of human nature.

The author's treatment of characters, then, may be judged by its contribution to the central impression, its success in making the characters seem real, and the extent to which it increases your knowledge of human nature.

**Setting.** Setting is seldom a main interest of the short story. In only two types is it really stressed: in the local-color story, focused on the interesting peculiarities of one section of the country; and in period stories about earlier times, when the way people lived is a main interest in itself. In such stories even the action should be conditioned by the setting — concerned with happenings that are typical of the locality or of the period, not with events that could occur at any place or time.

But even when setting is not a main interest, it can be definitely important. In stories that concentrate on a mood, description of the setting is used to build up atmosphere. Both the details chosen and the words used have a share in giving description an emotional tone, so that, almost without realizing why, the reader slips into the mood the author wants to create. Another frequent use of descriptive detail is to build up an impression of reality by providing a full background for the happenings. Poe began "The Gold Bug" with a matter-of-fact account of the island, so that the reader would fall into the habit of believing him before he came to the fantastic search for the treasure.

To discover just how successful an author has been in his use of the setting, you must first decide whether the setting furnishes the central impression or whether it is used merely to put the reader into a desired mood or to build up an impression of reality.

**Individuality and style.** Skill can make a good short-story writer, but it takes individuality as well to make a great one. The writer must have a distinctive touch of his own. He may have favorite localities or groups of people that he writes about. He may have

personal convictions about life which he repeats in his different stories. But the quality which can be relied upon more than any other to distinguish one man's work from another's is style.

Style is simply a man's own way of using words and shaping them into statements. It is as personal as the tone of his speaking voice — and almost as hard to describe. But a few keys to the style of a writer will be disclosed by the answers to these questions: Does he write in a leisurely fashion as if he had all evening to chat with you, or does he clip off his remarks as if he were rushing off to a busy day's work? Are you aware of his personality as if he were telling the story directly to you, or is the personal element completely suppressed? Does he use words solemnly for their exact meaning, or does he enjoy using lively language? Does he give much conversation, and does it have sparkle and flavor? You can answer all these and many more questions without really knowing what makes a man's style individual. But if you notice his manner of writing closely enough to answer these with conviction, you will develop the feeling for style that is so hard to outline and so satisfying to possess.

In the following pages you will find representatives of most of the important types of the short story. But this group of stories is probably only a handful compared with the ones you read in magazines in the course of a year. You can acquire genuine discrimination along with your diversion if you take a few minutes to check over each story you read in terms of the central impression at which the author aims; how he achieves the impression through his use of action, characters, and setting; and whether the finished product is commonplace or distinguished by originality or individuality. It is not particularly important just why you like the stories you choose. It *is* important that you realize why you like them.

### WASHINGTON IRVING (1783-1859)

Now we drop back to the beginnings of American literature and read a tale written by the "father of the American short story."

Washington Irving was the first American who successfully adopted literature as a calling. We think of Irving first of all as a New Yorker, for it was in New York that he was born, spent most of his years, and died. He discovered the beauty of the Hudson and the legends of the

Catskills, he immortalized *Sleepy Hollow*, and he created *Diedrich Knickerbocker*. But we also think of Irving as a cultivated, traveled man of the world. He spent many years in England and Spain, and his books reflect the charm of the former and the romance of the latter, as well as the flavor of his native America. Besides short stories he wrote essays (see page 266) and biography and history. All his works are characterized by his genial humor and clear, easy style.

### THE DEVIL AND TOM WALKER

This story, included in *Tales of a Traveler*, is more than one hundred years old.

Imagine yourself a guest at Sunnyside, Irving's home. You are near *Sleepy Hollow*, and from the windows you may look out over the Hudson River. You have just finished dinner, and before a blazing and crackling log fire you lean back in an easy chair and wait for your host to tell a story. There are no telephones, no radios to interrupt; no train will roar past toward Albany or New York City. In his charming old-school manner, pausing now and then to chuckle with you at some queer twist of the yarn, Irving weaves into his story the artistry of a master storyteller. Last night, perhaps, it was a colorful legend of old Spain with a little of the flavor of the *Arabian Nights*, but tonight he spins a story as American as are the characters of *Rip Van Winkle* and *Ichabod Crane*. He takes his time about the telling. Don't interrupt him or hurry him; a long, pleasant evening is before you.

A FEW miles from Boston in Massachusetts, there is a deep inlet, winding several miles into the interior of the country from Charles Bay, and terminating in a thickly wooded swamp or morass. On one side of this inlet is a beautiful dark grove; on the opposite side the land rises abruptly from the water's edge into a high ridge, on which grow a few scattered oaks of great age and immense size. Under one of these gigantic trees, according to old stories, there was a great amount of treasure buried by Kidd the pirate. The inlet allowed a facility to bring the money in a boat secretly and at night to the very foot of the hill; the elevation of the place permitted a good lookout to be kept that no one was at hand; while the remarkable trees formed good landmarks by which the place might easily be found again. The old stories add, moreover, that the devil presided at the hiding of the money, and took it under his guardianship; but this, it is well known, he always does with buried treasure, particularly when it has been ill-gotten. Be that as it may, Kidd never re-

turned to recover his wealth; being shortly after seized at Boston, sent out to England, and there hanged for a pirate.

About the year 1727, just at the time that earthquakes were prevalent in New England, and shook many tall sinners down upon their knees, there lived near this place a meager, miserly fellow, of the name of Tom Walker. He had a wife as miserly as himself: they were so miserly that they even conspired to cheat each other. Whatever the woman could lay hands on, she hid away; a hen could not cackle but she was on the alert to secure the new-laid egg. Her husband was continually prying about to detect her secret hoards, and many and fierce were the conflicts that took place about what ought to have been common property. They lived in a forlorn-looking house that stood alone, and had an air of starvation. A few straggling savin trees, emblems of sterility, grew near it; no smoke ever curled from its chimney; no traveler stopped at its door. A miserable horse, whose ribs were as articulate as the bars of a gridiron, stalked about a field, where a thin carpet of moss, scarcely covering the ragged beds of pudding stone, tantalized and balked his hunger; and sometimes he would lean his head over the fence, look piteously at the passer-by, and seem to petition deliverance from this land of famine.

The house and its inmates had altogether a bad name. Tom's wife was a tall termagant, fierce of temper, loud of tongue, and strong of arm. Her voice was often heard in wordy warfare with her husband; and his face sometimes showed signs that their conflicts were not confined to words. No one ventured, however, to interfere between them. The lonely wayfarer shrunk within himself at the horrid clamor and clapperclawing; eyed the den of discord askance; and hurried on his way, rejoicing, if a bachelor, in his celibacy.

One day that Tom Walker had been to a distant part of the neighborhood, he took what he considered a short cut homeward, through the swamp. Like most short cuts, it was an ill-chosen route. The swamp was thickly grown with great gloomy pines and hemlocks, some of them ninety feet high, which made it dark at noon-day, and a retreat for all the owls of the neighborhood. It was full of pits and quagmires, partly covered with weeds and mosses, where the green surface often betrayed the traveler into a gulf of black, smothering mud; there were also dark and stagnant pools, the abodes of the tadpole, the bullfrog, and the water snake; where the trunks of pines and hemlocks lay half drowned, half rotting, looking like alligators sleeping in the mire.

Tom had long been picking his way cautiously through this treach-



erous forest; stepping from tuft to tuft of rushes and roots, which afforded precarious footholds among deep sloughs; or pacing carefully, like a cat, along the prostrate trunks of trees; startled now and then by the sudden screaming of the bittern, or the quacking of a wild duck rising on the wing from some solitary pool. At length he arrived at a firm piece of ground, which ran out like a peninsula into the deep bosom of the swamp. It had been one of the strongholds of the Indians during their wars with the first colonists. Here they had thrown up a kind of fort, which they had looked upon as almost impregnable, and had used as a place of refuge for their squaws and children. Nothing remained of the old Indian fort but a few embankments, gradually sinking to the level of the surrounding earth, and already overgrown in part by oaks and other forest trees, the foliage of which formed a contrast to the dark pines and hemlocks of the swamp.

It was late in the dusk of evening when Tom Walker reached the old fort, and he paused there awhile to rest himself. Anyone but he would have felt unwilling to linger in this lonely, melancholy place, for the common people had a bad opinion of it, from the stories handed down from the time of the Indian wars; when it was asserted that the savages held incantations here, and made sacrifices to the evil spirit.

Tom Walker, however, was not a man to be troubled with any fears of the kind. He reposed himself for some time on the trunk of a fallen hemlock, listening to the boding cry of the tree toad, and delving with his walking staff into a mound of black mold at his feet. As he turned up the soil unconsciously, his staff struck against something hard. He raked it out of the vegetable mold and lo! a cloven skull, with an Indian tomahawk buried deep in it, lay before him. The rust on the weapon showed the time that had elapsed since this deathblow had been given. It was a dreary memento of the fierce struggle that had taken place in this last foothold of the Indian warriors.

"Humph!" said Tom Walker, as he gave it a kick to shake the dirt from it.

"Let that skull alone!" said a gruff voice. Tom lifted up his eyes, and beheld a great black man seated directly opposite him, on the stump of a tree. He was exceedingly surprised, having neither heard nor seen anyone approach; and he was still more perplexed on observing, as well as the gathering gloom would permit, that the stranger was neither Negro nor Indian. It is true he was dressed in

a rude half-Indian garb, and had a red belt or sash swathed round his body; but his face was neither black nor copper-color, but swarthy and dingy, and begrimed with soot, as if he had been accustomed to toil among fires and forges. He had a shock of coarse black hair, that stood out from his head in all directions, and bore an ax on his shoulder.

He scowled for a moment at Tom with a pair of great red eyes.

"What are you doing on my grounds?" said the black man, with a hoarse growling voice.

"Your grounds!" said Tom, with a sneer, "no more your grounds than mine; they belong to Deacon Peabody."

"Deacon Peabody be d——d," said the stranger, "as I flatter myself he will be, if he does not look more to his own sins and less to those of his neighbors. Look yonder, and see how Deacon Peabody is faring."

Tom looked in the direction that the stranger pointed, and beheld one of the great trees, fair and flourishing without, but rotten at the core, and saw that it had been nearly hewn through, so that the first high wind was likely to blow it down. On the bark of the tree was scored the name of Deacon Peabody, an eminent man, who had waxed wealthy by driving shrewd bargains with the Indians. He now looked around, and found most of the tall trees marked with the name of some great man of the colony, and all more or less scored by the ax. The one on which he had been seated, and which had evidently just been hewn down, bore the name of Crowninshield; and he recollected a mighty rich man of that name, who made a vulgar display of wealth, which it was whispered he had acquired by buccaneering.

"He's just ready for burning!" said the black man, with a growl of triumph. "You see I am likely to have a good stock of firewood for winter."

"But what right have you," said Tom, "to cut down Deacon Peabody's timber?"

"The right of a prior claim," said the other. "This woodland belonged to me long before one of your white-faced race put foot upon the soil."

"And pray, who are you, if I may be so bold?" said Tom.

"Oh, I go by various names. I am the wild huntsman in some countries; the black miner in others. In this neighborhood I am known by the name of the black woodsman. I am he to whom the red men consecrated this spot, and in honor of whom they now and

then roasted a white man, by way of sweet-smelling sacrifice. Since the red men have been exterminated by you white savages, I amuse myself by presiding at the persecutions of Quakers and Anabaptists<sup>1</sup>; I am the great patron and prompter of slave dealers, and the grand master of the Salem witches."

"The upshot of all which is, that, if I mistake not," said Tom, sturdily, "you are he commonly called Old Scratch."

"The same, at your service!" replied the black man, with a half-civil nod.

Such was the opening of this interview, according to the old story: though it has almost too familiar an air to be credited. One would think that to meet with such a singular personage, in this wild, lonely place, would have shaken any man's nerves; but Tom was a hard-minded fellow, not easily daunted, and he had lived so long with a termagant wife, that he did not even fear the devil.

It is said that after this commencement they had a long and earnest conversation together, as Tom returned homeward. The black man told him of great sums of money buried by Kidd the pirate, under the oak trees on the high ridge, not far from the morass. All these were under his command, and protected by his power, so that none could find them but such as propitiated his favor. These he offered to place within Tom Walker's reach, having conceived an especial kindness for him; but they were to be had only on certain conditions. What these conditions were may be easily surmised, though Tom never disclosed them publicly. They must have been very hard, for he required time to think of them, and he was not a man to stick at trifles when money was in view. When they had reached the edge of the swamp, the stranger paused. "What proof have I that all you have been telling me is true?" said Tom. "There's my signature," said the black man, pressing his finger on Tom's forehead. So saying, he turned off among the thickets of the swamp, and seemed, as Tom said, to go down, down, down, into the earth, until nothing but his head and shoulders could be seen, and so on, until he totally disappeared.

When Tom reached home, he found the black print of a finger burnt, as it were, into his forehead, which nothing could obliterate. The first news his wife had to tell him was the sudden death of Absalom Crowninshield, the rich buccaneer. It was announced in the papers with the usual flourish, that "a great man had fallen in Israel."

<sup>1</sup> **Anabaptists:** a religious sect which arose in Switzerland in 1523. Its members were subject to persecution because of their opposition to infant baptism.

Tom recollected the tree which his black friend had just hewn down, and which was ready for burning. "Let the freebooter roast," said Tom, "who cares!" He now felt convinced that all he had heard and seen was no illusion.

He was not prone to let his wife into his confidence; but as this was an uneasy secret, he willingly shared it with her. All her avarice was awakened at the mention of hidden gold, and she urged her husband to comply with the black man's terms, and secure what would make them wealthy for life. However Tom might have felt disposed to sell himself to the devil, he was determined not to do so to oblige his wife; so he flatly refused, out of the mere spirit of contradiction. Many and bitter were the quarrels they had on the subject; but the more she talked, the more resolute was Tom not to be damned to please her.

At length she determined to drive the bargain on her own account, and if she succeeded, to keep all the gain to herself. Being of the same fearless temper as her husband, she set off for the old Indian fort toward the close of a summer's day. She was many hours absent. When she came back, she was reserved and sullen in her replies. She spoke something of a black man, whom she had met about twilight hewing at the root of a tall tree. He was sulky, however, and would not come to terms: she was to go again with a propitiatory offering, but what it was she forbore to say.

The next evening she set off for the swamp, with her apron heavily laden. Tom waited and waited for her, but in vain; midnight came, but she did not make her appearance: morning, noon, night returned, but still she did not come. Tom now grew uneasy for her safety, especially as he found she had carried off in her apron the silver teapot and spoons, and every portable article of value. Another night elapsed, another morning came, but no wife. In a word, she was never heard of more.

What was her real fate nobody knows, in consequence of so many pretending to know. It is one of those facts which have become confounded by a variety of historians. Some asserted that she lost her way among the tangled mazes of the swamp, and sank into some pit or slough; others, more uncharitable, hinted that she had eloped with the household booty, and made off to some other province; while others surmised that the tempter had decoyed her into a dismal quagmire, on the top of which her hat was found lying. In confirmation of this, it was said a great black man, with an ax on his shoulder, was seen late that very evening coming out of the swamp, carrying a bundle tied in a checked apron, with an air of surly triumph.

The most current and probable story, however, observes, that Tom Walker grew so anxious about the fate of his wife and his property, that he set out at length to seek them both at the Indian fort. During a long summer's afternoon he searched about the gloomy place, but no wife was to be seen. He called her name repeatedly, but she was nowhere to be heard. The bittern alone responded to his voice, as he flew screaming by; or the bullfrog croaked dolefully from a neighboring pool. At length, it is said, just in the brown hour of twilight, when the owls began to hoot, and the bats to flit about, his attention was attracted by the clamor of carrion crows hovering about a cypress tree. He looked up, and beheld a bundle tied in a checked apron, and hanging in the branches of the tree, with a great vulture perched hard by, as if keeping watch upon it. He leaped with joy; for he recognized his wife's apron, and supposed it to contain the household valuables. HI

"Let us get hold of the property," said he, consolingly to himself, "and we will endeavor to do without the woman."

As he scrambled up the tree, the vulture spread its wide wings, and sailed off, screaming, into the deep shadows of the forest. Tom seized the checked apron, but, woeful sight! found nothing but a heart and liver tied up in it!

Such, according to this most authentic old story, was all that was to be found of Tom's wife. She had probably attempted to deal with the black man as she had been accustomed to deal with her husband; but though a female scold is generally considered a match for the devil, yet in this instance she appears to have had the worst of it. She must have died game, however; for it is said Tom noticed many prints of cloven feet deeply stamped about the tree, and found handfuls of hair, that looked as if they had been plucked from the coarse black shock of the woodman. Tom knew his wife's prowess by experience. He shrugged his shoulders, as he looked at the signs of a fierce clapperclawing. "Egad," said he to himself, "Old Scratch must have had a tough time of it!"

Tom consoled himself for the loss of his property, with the loss of his wife, for he was a man of fortitude. He even felt something like gratitude toward the black woodman, who, he considered, had done him a kindness. He sought, therefore, to cultivate a further acquaintance with him, but for some time without success; the old blacklegs played shy, for whatever people may think, he is not always to be had for calling for; he knows how to play his cards when pretty sure of his game.

At length, it is said, when delay had whetted Tom's eagerness to the quick, and prepared him to agree to anything rather than not gain the promised treasure, he met the black man one evening in his usual woodman's dress, with his ax on his shoulder, sauntering along the swamp, and humming a tune. He affected to receive Tom's advances with great indifference, made brief replies, and went on humming his tune.

By degrees, however, Tom brought him to business, and they began to haggle about the terms on which the former was to have the pirate's treasure. There was one condition which need not be mentioned, being generally understood in all cases where the devil grants favors; but there were others about which, though of less importance, he was inflexibly obstinate. He insisted that the money found through his means should be employed in his service. He proposed, therefore, that Tom should employ it in the black traffic; that is to say, that he should fit out a slave ship. This, however, Tom resolutely refused; he was bad enough in all conscience; but the devil himself could not tempt him to turn slave trader.

Finding Tom so squeamish on this point, he did not insist upon it, but proposed, instead, that he should turn usurer; the devil being extremely anxious for the increase of usurers, looking upon them as his peculiar people.

To this no objections were made, for it was just to Tom's taste.

"You shall open a broker's shop in Boston next month," said the black man.

"I'll do it tomorrow, if you wish," said Tom Walker.

"You shall lend money at two per cent a month."

"Egad, I'll charge four!" replied Tom Walker.

"You shall extort bonds, foreclose mortgages, drive the merchants to bankruptcy —"

"I'll drive them to the d——l," cried Tom Walker.

"You are the usurer for my money!" said blacklegs with delight.

"When will you want the rhino?"<sup>1</sup>

"This very night."

"Done!" said the devil.

"Done!" said Tom Walker.

So they shook hands and struck a bargain.

A few days' time saw Tom Walker seated behind his desk in a countinghouse in Boston.

His reputation for a ready-moneyed man, who would lend money

<sup>1</sup> rhino: money.

out for a good consideration, soon spread abroad. Everybody remembers the time of Governor Belcher,<sup>1</sup> when money was particularly scarce. It was a time of paper credit. The country had been deluged with government bills, the famous Land Bank<sup>2</sup> had been established; there had been a rage for speculating; the people had run mad with schemes for new settlements; for building cities in the wilderness; land jobbers went about with maps of grants, and townships, and El Dorados, lying nobody knew where, but which everybody was ready to purchase. In a word, the great speculating fever which breaks out every now and then in the country, had raged to an alarming degree, and everybody was dreaming of making sudden fortunes from nothing. As usual the fever had subsided; the dream had gone off, and the imaginary fortunes with it; the patients were left in doleful plight, and the whole country resounded with the consequent cry of "hard times."

At this propitious time of public distress did Tom Walker set up as usurer in Boston. His door was soon thronged by customers. The needy and adventurous: the gambling speculator; the dreaming land jobber; the thriftless tradesman; the merchant with cracked credit; in short, everyone driven to raise money by desperate means and desperate sacrifices, hurried to Tom Walker.

Thus Tom was the universal friend of the needy, and acted like a "friend in need"; that is to say, he always exacted good pay and good security. In proportion to the distress of the applicant was the highness of his terms. He accumulated bonds and mortgages, gradually squeezed his customers closer and closer: and sent them at length, dry as a sponge, from his door.

In this way he made money hand over hand; became a rich and mighty man, and exalted his cocked hat upon 'Change. He built himself, as usual, a vast house, out of ostentation; but left the greater part of it unfinished and unfurnished, out of parsimony. He even set up a carriage in the fullness of his vainglory, though he nearly starved the horses which drew it; and as the ungreased wheels groaned and screeched on the axletrees, you would have thought you heard the souls of the poor debtors he was squeezing.

As Tom waxed old, however, he grew thoughtful. Having secured the good things of this world, he began to feel anxious about those of the next. He thought with regret on the bargain he had made with his black friend, and set his wits to work to cheat him out of the conditions. He became, therefore, all of a sudden, a violent church-

<sup>1</sup> Jonathan Belcher was governor of Massachusetts from 1730 to 1741. <sup>2</sup> Land Bank: a system by which the province advanced money on mortgages on land.

goer. He prayed loudly and strenuously, as if heaven were to be taken by force of lungs. Indeed, one might always tell when he had sinned most during the week, by the clamor of his Sunday devotion. The quiet Christians who had been modestly and steadfastly traveling Zionward, were struck with self-reproach at seeing themselves so suddenly outstripped in their career by this new-made convert. Tom was as rigid in religious as in money matters; he was a stern supervisor and censurer of his neighbors, and seemed to think every sin entered up to their account became a credit on his own side of the page. He even talked of the expediency of reviving the persecution of Quakers and Anabaptists. In a word, Tom's zeal became as notorious as his riches.

Still, in spite of all this strenuous attention to forms, Tom had a lurking dread that the devil, after all, would have his due. That he might not be taken unawares, therefore, it is said he always carried a small Bible in his coat pocket. He had also a great folio Bible on his countinghouse desk, and would frequently be found reading it when people called on business; on such occasions he would lay his green spectacles in the book, to mark the place, while he turned round to drive some usurious bargain.

Some say that Tom grew a little crackbrained in his old days, and that, fancying his end approaching, he had his horse new-shod, saddled and bridled, and buried with his feet uppermost; because he supposed that at the last day the world would be turning upside down; in which case he should find his horse standing ready for mounting, and he was determined at the worst to give his old friend a run for it. This, however, is probably a mere old wives' fable. If he really did take such a precaution, it was totally superfluous; at least so says the authentic old legend, which closes this story in the following manner.

One hot summer afternoon in the dog days, just as a terrible black thunder-gust was coming up, Tom sat in his countinghouse, in his white linen cap and India silk morning gown. He was on the point of foreclosing a mortgage, by which he would complete the ruin of an unlucky land speculator for whom he had professed the greatest friendship. The poor land jobber begged him to grant a few months' indulgence. Tom had grown testy and irritated, and refused another day.

"My family will be ruined, and brought upon the parish," said the land jobber. "Charity begins at home," replied Tom; "I must take care of myself in these hard times."

"You have made so much money out of me," said the speculator.



Tom lost his patience and his piety. "The devil take me," said he, "if I have made a farthing!"

Just then there were three loud knocks at the street door. He stepped out to see who was there. A black man was holding a black horse, which neighed and stamped with impatience.

"Tom, you're come for," said the black fellow, gruffly. Tom shrank back, but too late. He had left his little Bible at the bottom of his coat pocket, and his big Bible on the desk buried under the mortgage he was about to foreclose: never was sinner taken more unawares. The black man whisked him like a child into the saddle, gave the horse the lash, and away he galloped, with Tom on his back, in the midst of the thunderstorm. The clerks stuck their pens behind their ears, and stared after him from the windows. Away went Tom Walker, dashing down the streets; his white cap bobbing up and down: his morning gown fluttering in the wind, and his steed striking fire out of the pavement at every bound. When the clerks turned to look for the black man, he had disappeared.

Tom Walker never returned to foreclose the mortgage. A countryman, who lived on the border of the swamp, reported that in the height of the thunder-gust he had heard a great clattering of hoofs and a howling along the road, and running to the window caught sight of a figure, such as I have described, on a horse that galloped like mad across the fields, over the hills, and down into the black hemlock swamp toward the old Indian fort; and that shortly after a thunderbolt falling in that direction seemed to set the whole forest in a blaze.

The good people of Boston shook their heads and shrugged their shoulders, but had been so much accustomed to witches and goblins, and tricks of the devil, in all kinds of shapes, from the first settlement of the colony, that they were not so much horror-struck as might have been expected. Trustees were appointed to take charge of Tom's effects. There was nothing, however, to administer upon. On searching his coffers, all his bonds and mortgages were found reduced to cinders. In place of gold and silver, his iron chest was filled with chips and shavings; two skeletons lay in his stable instead of his half-starved horses, and the very next day his great house took fire and was burnt to the ground.

Such was the end of Tom Walker and his ill-gotten wealth. Let all griping money brokers lay this story to heart. The truth of it is not to be doubted. The very hole under the oak trees, whence he dug Kidd's money, is to be seen to this day; and the neighboring

swamp and old Indian fort are often haunted in stormy nights by a figure on horseback, in morning gown and white cap, which is doubtless the troubled spirit of the usurer. In fact, the story has resolved itself into a proverb, and is the origin of that popular saying, so prevalent throughout New England, of "The Devil and Tom Walker."

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Did you feel the style on which Irving's fame rests? Can you think of any of the eighteenth-century English writers whose manner may have influenced Irving? Point out sentences which illustrate Irving's command of the language.

2. Did the story make you laugh? Did it make you chuckle? How would you characterize Irving's humor? Give some examples.

3. In what spirit does Irving say, "Let all griping money brokers lay this story to heart"?

4. Count up the familiar expressions which Irving has made concrete in this story. Examples are "The devil would have his due," and "The devil take me."

5. If you like this story, what reply have you for the realists of your class who did not like it "because it is so impossible and could never have happened"?

6. What other stories by Irving do you know in which there is a touch of the fantastic?

7. Vocabulary: termagant, buccaneering, morass, propitiated, carrion, usurer, El Dorados.

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

8. A great many English words are built on the Latin stem *terminus*, which means a boundary or limit. Two different forms occur in this story, *terminating* (page 60) and *exterminated* (page 64). You can readily see that *terminating* means coming to limits and, therefore, to an end. *Exterminated* means literally driven outside the boundaries, but we use it more often simply to mean destroyed. You will find farther on *termination* (page 95) and *interminable* (page 165), both of which you can readily figure out from the stem. Anything is *interminable* which can have no *termination*. Can you think of other, more common words built on this stem?

#### *For Ambitious Students*

9. Read several of the legends in *The Sketch Book*, *The Alhambra*, and *Tales of a Traveler*, to discover how Irving makes use of the supernatural element in his stories.

10. What stories by other authors do you know in which a character negotiates with the devil? Investigate the *Faust* legend. Read "The Devil and Daniel Webster" by Stephen Vincent Benét, one of the great short stories of the twentieth century.

## NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-1864)

We do not think of Hawthorne as a gracious host like Irving, who tells charming stories before his hearth fire. Hawthorne was reared by a widowed mother who for forty years shut herself completely from normal contacts with the world, even refusing to take her meals with her children. From his mother he inherited a love of solitude and a habit of meditation that made him a stranger to the easy sociability of the world. In the pursuance of his resolution to be an author he shut himself up in a seclusion known to no other American writer. He rarely left his room except for an occasional solitary walk; he ate by himself in his room; he made no friends or acquaintances; he brooded and wrote alone. He published his first stories anonymously and once characterized himself as "the obscurest man of letters in America."

Later, encouraged by his wife, whose belief in his genius was genuine and heartening, he gradually assumed a more normal, natural contact with his fellows. Finally came full recognition of his genius as a novelist. An appointment as consul to Liverpool by President Franklin Pierce, a college friend, gave him an opportunity for foreign travel, and his life ended with four happy years in his home, "The Wayside," at Concord.

## THE MINISTER'S BLACK VEIL

### A PARABLE

Hawthorne was a profound thinker; he had probed deep into the impulses of the human heart. His stories have depth of thought, moral values, compactness, climax, and power. Notice how in this story he plunges immediately into its main situation, how the action rolls rapidly and without digressions toward its climax, and how it stops when the climax has been reached. Observe the almost poetic quality of the sentences. In this story Hawthorne is not skimming the surface of human nature; he is conveying a profound truth that is almost awful in its implication; namely, that we cannot hope to know each other's true selves. The minister's black veil is a symbol, something the writer uses to stand for the insurmountable barrier

between all human souls. Hawthorne is trying to make us feel that each of us, too, wears his own "black veil." Emerson expresses the same awesome thought in his essay "Friendship" (see page 281). Although this story was written in 1836, it has a significance that has not diminished through its century of life.

THE SEXTON stood in the porch of Milford<sup>1</sup> meetinghouse, pulling busily at the bell rope. The old people of the village came stooping along the street. Children, with bright faces, tripped merrily beside their parents, or mimicked a graver gait, in the conscious dignity of their Sunday clothes. Spruce bachelors looked sidelong at the pretty maidens, and fancied that the Sabbath sunshine made them prettier than on weekdays. When the throng had mostly streamed into the porch, the sexton began to toll the bell, keeping his eye on the Reverend Mr. Hooper's door. The first glimpse of the clergyman's figure was the signal for the bell to cease its summons.

"But what has good Parson Hooper got upon his face?" cried the sexton in astonishment.

All within hearing immediately turned about, and beheld the semblance of Mr. Hooper, pacing slowly his meditative way toward the meetinghouse. With one accord they started, expressing more wonder than if some strange minister were coming to dust the cushions of Mr. Hooper's pulpit.

"Are you sure it is our parson?" inquired Goodman<sup>2</sup> Gray of the sexton.

"Of a certainty it is good Mr. Hooper," replied the sexton. "He was to have exchanged pulpits with Parson Shute, of Westbury; but Parson Shute sent to excuse himself yesterday, being to preach a funeral sermon."

The cause of so much amazement may appear sufficiently slight. Mr. Hooper, a gentlemanly person, of about thirty, though still a bachelor, was dressed with due clerical neatness, as if a careful wife had starched his band, and brushed the weekly dust from his Sunday's garb. There was but one thing remarkable in his appearance. Swathed about his forehead, and hanging down over his face, so low as to be shaken by his breath, Mr. Hooper had on a black veil.<sup>3</sup> On a nearer view it seemed to consist of two folds of crape, which entirely

<sup>1</sup> Milford: a town in Massachusetts. <sup>2</sup> Goodman: Mister. <sup>3</sup> Another clergyman in New England, Mr. Joseph Moody of York, Maine, who died about eighty years since, made himself remarkable by the same eccentricity that is here related of the Reverend Mr. Hooper. In his case, however, the symbol had a different import. In early life he had accidentally killed a beloved friend, and from that day till the hour of his own death he hid his face from men. [Author's note.]

concealed his features, except the mouth and chin, but probably did not intercept his sight, further than to give a darkened aspect to all living and inanimate things. With this gloomy shade before him, good Mr. Hooper walked onward, at a slow and quiet pace, stooping somewhat, and looking on the ground, as is customary with abstracted men, yet nodding kindly to those of his parishioners who still waited on the meetinghouse steps. But so wonder-struck were they that his greeting hardly met with a return.

"I can't really feel as if good Mr. Hooper's face was behind that piece of crape," said the sexton.

"I don't like it," muttered an old woman, as she hobbled into the meetinghouse. "He has changed himself into something awful, only by hiding his face."

"Our parson has gone mad!" cried Goodman Gray, following him across the threshold.

A rumor of some unaccountable phenomenon had preceded Mr. Hooper into the meetinghouse, and set all the congregation astir. Few could refrain from twisting their heads toward the door; many stood upright, and turned directly about; while several little boys clambered upon the seats, and came down again with a terrible racket. There was a general bustle, a rustling of the women's gowns and shuffling of the men's feet, greatly at variance with that hushed repose which should attend the entrance of the minister. But Mr. Hooper appeared not to notice the perturbation of his people. He entered with an almost noiseless step, bent his head mildly to the pews on each side, and bowed as he passed his oldest parishioner, a white-haired great-grandsire, who occupied an armchair in the center of the aisle. It was strange to observe how slowly this venerable man became conscious of something singular in the appearance of his pastor. He seemed not fully to partake of the prevailing wonder, till Mr. Hooper had ascended the stairs, and showed himself in the pulpit, face to face with his congregation, except for the black veil. That mysterious emblem was never once withdrawn. It shook with his measured breath, as he gave out the psalm; it threw its obscurity between him and the holy page, as he read the Scriptures; and while he prayed, the veil lay heavily on his uplifted countenance. Did he seek to hide it from the dread Being whom he was addressing?

Such was the effect of this simple piece of crape, that more than one woman of delicate nerves was forced to leave the meetinghouse. Yet perhaps the pale-faced congregation was almost as fearful a sight to the minister, as his black veil to them.

Mr. Hooper had the reputation of a good preacher, but not an energetic one; he strove to win his people heavenward by mild, persuasive influences, rather than to drive them thither by the thunders of the Word. The sermon which he now delivered was marked by the same characteristics of style and manner as the general series of his pulpit oratory. But there was something, either in the sentiment of the discourse itself, or in the imagination of the auditors, which made it greatly the most powerful effort that they had ever heard from their pastor's lips. It was tinged, rather more darkly than usual, with the gentle gloom of Mr. Hooper's temperament. The subject had reference to secret sin, and those sad mysteries which we hide from our nearest and dearest, and would fain conceal from our own consciousness, even forgetting that the Omniscient can detect them. A subtle power was breathed into his words. Each member of the congregation, the most innocent girl, and the man of hardened breast, felt as if the preacher had crept upon them, behind his awful veil, and discovered their hoarded iniquity of deed or thought. Many spread their clasped hands on their bosoms. There was nothing terrible in what Mr. Hooper said, at least no violence; and yet, with every tremor of his melancholy voice, the hearers quaked. An unsought pathos came hand in hand with awe. So sensible were the audience of some unwonted attribute in their minister, that they longed for a breath of wind to blow aside the veil, almost believing that a stranger's visage would be discovered, though the form, gesture, and voice were those of Mr. Hooper.

At the close of the services, the people hurried out with indecorous confusion, eager to communicate their pent-up amazement, and conscious of lighter spirits the moment they lost sight of the black veil. Some gathered in little circles, huddled closely together, with their mouths all whispering in the center; some went homeward alone, wrapt in silent meditation; some talked loudly, and profaned the Sabbath day with ostentatious laughter. A few shook their sagacious heads, intimating that they could penetrate the mystery; while one or two affirmed that there was no mystery at all, but only that Mr. Hooper's eyes were so weakened by the midnight lamp, as to require a shade. After a brief interval, forth came good Mr. Hooper also, in the rear of his flock. Turning his veiled face from one group to another, he paid due reverence to the hoary heads, saluted the middle-aged with kind dignity as their friend and spiritual guide, greeted the young with mingled authority and love, and laid his hands on the little children's heads to bless them. Such was always his custom on

the Sabbath day. Strange and bewildered looks repaid him for his courtesy. None, as on former occasions, aspired to the honor of walking by their pastor's side. Old Squire Saunders, doubtless by an accidental lapse of memory, neglected to invite Mr. Hooper to his table, where the good clergyman had been wont to bless the food, almost every Sunday since his settlement. He returned, therefore, to the parsonage, and, at the moment of closing the door, was observed to look back upon the people, all of whom had their eyes fixed upon the minister. A sad smile gleamed faintly from beneath the black veil, and flickered about his mouth, glimmering as he disappeared.

"How strange," said a lady, "that a simple black veil, such as any woman might wear on her bonnet, should become such a terrible thing on Mr. Hooper's face!"

"Something must surely be amiss with Mr. Hooper's intellects," observed her husband, the physician of the village. "But the strangest part of the affair is the effect of this vagary, even on a sober-minded man like myself. The black veil, though it covers only our pastor's face, throws its influence over his whole person, and makes him ghostlike from head to foot. Do you not feel it so?"

"Truly do I," replied the lady; "and I would not be alone with him for the world. I wonder he is not afraid to be alone with himself!"

"Men sometimes are so," said her husband.

The afternoon service was attended with similar circumstances. At its conclusion, the bell tolled for the funeral of a young lady. The relatives and friends were assembled in the house, and the more distant acquaintances stood about the door, speaking of the good qualities of the deceased, when their talk was interrupted by the appearance of Mr. Hooper, still covered with his black veil. It was now an appropriate emblem. The clergyman stepped into the room where the corpse was laid, and bent over the coffin, to take a last farewell of his deceased parishioner. As he stooped, the veil hung straight down from his forehead, so that, if her eyelids had not been closed forever, the dead maiden might have seen his face. Could Mr. Hooper be fearful of her glance, that he so hastily caught back the black veil? A person who watched the interview between the dead and the living scrupled not to affirm, that, at the instant when the clergyman's features were disclosed, the corpse had slightly shuddered, rustling the shroud and muslin cap, though the countenance retained the composure of death. A superstitious old woman was the only witness of this prodigy. From the coffin Mr. Hooper passed

into the chamber of the mourners, and thence to the head of the staircase, to make the funeral prayer. It was a tender and heart-dissolving prayer, full of sorrow, yet so imbued with celestial hopes, that the music of a heavenly harp, swept by the fingers of the dead, seemed faintly to be heard among the saddest accents of the minister. The people trembled, though they but darkly understood him when he prayed that they, and himself, and all of mortal race, might be ready, as he trusted this young maiden had been, for the dreadful hour that should snatch the veil from their faces. The bearers went heavily forth, and the mourners followed, saddening all the street, with the dead before them, and Mr. Hooper in his black veil behind.

"Why do you look back?" said one in the procession to his partner.

"I had a fancy," replied she, "that the minister and the maiden's spirit were walking hand in hand."

"And so had I, at the same moment," said the other.

That night, the handsomest couple in Milford village were to be joined in wedlock. Though reckoned a melancholy man, Mr. Hooper had a placid cheerfulness for such occasions, which often excited a sympathetic smile where livelier merriment would have been thrown away. There was no quality of his disposition which made him more beloved than this. The company at the wedding awaited his arrival with impatience, trusting that the strange awe, which had gathered over him throughout the day, would now be dispelled. But such was not the result. When Mr. Hooper came, the first thing that their eyes rested on was the same horrible black veil, which had added deeper gloom to the funeral, and could portend nothing but evil to the wedding. Such was its immediate effect on the guests that a cloud seemed to have rolled duskily from beneath the black crape, and dimmed the light of the candles. The bridal pair stood up before the minister. But the bride's cold fingers quivered in the tremulous hand of the bridegroom, and her deathlike paleness caused a whisper that the maiden who had been buried a few hours before was come from her grave to be married. If ever another wedding were so dismal, it was that famous one where they tolled the wedding knell.<sup>1</sup> After performing the ceremony, Mr. Hooper raised a glass of wine to his lips, wishing happiness to the new-married couple in a strain of mild pleasantries that ought to have brightened the features of the guests, like a cheerful gleam from the hearth. At that instant, catching a glimpse of his figure in the looking glass, the black veil involved his

<sup>1</sup> A reference to "The Wedding Knell," the story that precedes this in *Twice-Told Tales*.



own spirit in the horror with which it overwhelmed all others. His frame shuddered, his lips grew white, he spilt the untasted wine upon the carpet, and rushed forth into the darkness. For the Earth, too, had on her Black Veil.

The next day, the whole village of Milford talked of little else than Parson Hooper's black veil. That, and the mystery concealed behind it, supplied a topic for discussion between acquaintances meeting in the street, and good women gossiping at their open windows. It was the first item of news that the tavernkeeper told to his guests. The children babbled of it on their way to school. One imitative little imp covered his face with an old black handkerchief, thereby so affrighting his playmates that the panic seized himself, and he well-nigh lost his wits by his own wagghery.

It was remarkable that of all the busybodies and impertinent people in the parish, not one ventured to put the plain question to Mr. Hooper, wherefore he did this thing. Hitherto, whenever there appeared the slightest call for such interference, he had never lacked advisers, nor shown himself averse to be guided by their judgment. If he erred at all, it was by so painful a degree of self-distrust, that even the mildest censure would lead him to consider an indifferent action as a crime. Yet, though so well acquainted with this amiable weakness, no individual among his parishioners chose to make the black veil a subject of friendly remonstrance. There was a feeling of dread, neither plainly confessed nor carefully concealed, which caused each to shift the responsibility upon another, till at length it was found expedient to send a deputation of the church, in order to deal with Mr. Hooper about the mystery, before it should grow into a scandal. Never did an embassy so ill discharge its duties. The minister received them with friendly courtesy, but remained silent. After they were seated, leaving to his visitors the whole burden of introducing their important business. The topic, it might be supposed, was obvious enough. There was the black veil swathed round Mr. Hooper's forehead, and concealing every feature above his placid mouth, on which, at times, they could perceive the glimmering of a melancholy smile. But that piece of crape, to their imagination, seemed to hang down before his heart, the symbol of a fearful secret between him and them. Were the veil but cast aside, they might speak freely of it, but not till then. Thus they sat a considerable time, speechless, confused, and shrinking uneasily from Mr. Hooper's eye, which they felt to be fixed upon them with an invisible glance. Finally, the deputies returned abashed to their constituents, pro-

nouncing the matter too weighty to be handled, except by a council of the churches, if, indeed, it might not require a general synod.

But there was one person in the village unappalled by the awe with which the black veil had impressed all besides herself. When the deputies returned without an explanation, or even venturing to demand one, she, with the calm energy of her character, determined to chase away the strange cloud that appeared to be settling round Mr. Hooper, every moment more darkly than before. As his plighted wife, it should be her privilege to know what the black veil concealed. At the minister's first visit, therefore, she entered upon the subject with a direct simplicity, which made the task easier both for him and her. After he had seated himself, she fixed her eyes steadfastly upon the veil, but could discern nothing of the dreadful gloom that had so overawed the multitude; it was but a double fold of crape, hanging down from his forehead to his mouth, and slightly stirring with his breath.

"No," said she aloud, and smiling, "there is nothing terrible in this piece of crape, except that it hides a face which I am always glad to look upon. Come, good sir, let the sun shine from behind the cloud. First lay aside your black veil; then tell me why you put it on."

Mr. Hooper's smile glimmered faintly.

"There is an hour to come," said he, "when all of us shall cast aside our veils. Take it not amiss, beloved friend, if I wear this piece of crape till then."

"Your words are a mystery, too," returned the young lady. "Take away the veil from them, at least."

"Elizabeth, I will," said he, "so far as my vow may suffer me. Know, then, this veil is a type and a symbol, and I am bound to wear it ever, both in light and darkness, in solitude and before the gaze of multitudes, and as with strangers, so with my familiar friends. No mortal eye will see it withdrawn. This dismal shade must separate me from the world; even you, Elizabeth, can never come behind it!"

"What grievous affliction hath befallen you," she earnestly inquired, "that you should thus darken your eyes forever?"

"If it be a sign of mourning," replied Mr. Hooper, "I, perhaps, like most other mortals, have sorrows dark enough to be typified by a black veil."

"But what if the world will not believe that it is the type of an innocent sorrow?" urged Elizabeth. "Beloved and respected as you are, there may be whispers that you hide your face under the con-

sciousness of secret sin. For the sake of your holy office, do away this scandal! ”

The color rose into her cheeks as she intimated the nature of the rumors that were already abroad in the village. But Mr. Hooper's mildness did not forsake him. He even smiled again — that same sad smile, which always appeared like a faint glimmering of light, proceeding from the obscurity beneath the veil.

“ If I hide my face for sorrow, there is cause enough,” he merely replied; “ and if I cover it for secret sin, what mortal might not do the same? ”

And with this gentle, but unconquerable obstinacy did he resist her entreaties. At length Elizabeth sat silent. For a few moments she appeared lost in thought, considering, probably, what new methods might be tried to withdraw her lover from so dark a fantasy, which, if it had no other meaning, was perhaps a symptom of mental disease. Though of a firmer character than his own, the tears rolled down her cheeks. But, in an instant, as it were, a new feeling took the place of sorrow; her eyes were fixed insensibly on the black veil, when, like a sudden twilight in the air, its terrors fell around her. She arose, and stood trembling before him.

“ And do you feel it then, at last? ” said he mournfully.

She made no reply, but covered her eyes with her hand, and turned to leave the room. He rushed forward and caught her arm.

“ Have patience with me, Elizabeth! ” cried he, passionately. “ Do not desert me, though this veil must be between us here on earth. Be mine, and hereafter there shall be no veil over my face, no darkness between our souls! It is but a mortal veil — it is not for eternity! O! you know not how lonely I am, and how frightened, to be alone behind my black veil. Do not leave me in this miserable obscurity forever! ”

“ Lift the veil but once, and look me in the face,” said she.

“ Never! It cannot be! ” replied Mr. Hooper.

“ Then farewell! ” said Elizabeth.

She withdrew her arm from his grasp, and slowly departed, pausing at the door, to give one long shuddering gaze, that seemed almost to penetrate the mystery of the black veil. But, even amid his grief, Mr. Hooper smiled to think that only a material emblem had separated him from happiness, though the horrors which it shadowed forth must be drawn darkly between the fondest of lovers.

From that time no attempts were made to remove Mr. Hooper's black veil, or, by a direct appeal, to discover the secret which it was

supposed to hide. By persons who claimed a superiority to popular prejudice, it was reckoned more an eccentric whim, such as often mingles with the sober actions of men otherwise rational, and tinges them all with its own semblance of insanity. But with the multitude, good Mr. Hooper was irreparably a bugbear. He could not walk the street with any peace of mind, so conscious was he that the gentle and timid would turn aside to avoid him, and that others would make it a point of hardihood to throw themselves in his way. The impertinence of the latter class compelled him to give up his customary walk at sunset to the burial ground; for when he leaned pensively over the gate, there would always be faces behind the gravestones, peeping at his black veil. A fable went the rounds that the stare of the dead people drove him thence. It grieved him, to the very depth of his kind heart, to observe how the children fled from his approach, breaking up their merriest sports, while his melancholy figure was yet afar off. Their instinctive dread caused him to feel more strongly than aught else, that a preternatural horror was interwoven with the threads of the black crape. In truth, his own antipathy to the veil was known to be so great, that he never willingly passed before a mirror, nor stooped to drink at a still fountain, lest, in its peaceful bosom, he should be affrighted by himself. This was what gave plausibility to the whispers, that Mr. Hooper's conscience tortured him for some great crime too horrible to be entirely concealed, or otherwise than so obscurely intimated. Thus, from beneath the black veil, there rolled a cloud into the sunshine, an ambiguity of sin or sorrow, which enveloped the poor minister, so that love or sympathy could never reach him. It was said that ghost and fiend consorted with him there. With self-shudderings and outward terrors, he walked continually in its shadow, groping darkly within his own soul, or gazing through a medium that saddened the whole world. Even the lawless wind, it was believed, respected his dreadful secret, and never blew aside the veil. But still good Mr. Hooper sadly smiled at the pale visages of the worldly throng as he passed by.

Among all its bad influences, the black veil had the one desirable effect, of making its wearer a very efficient clergyman. By the aid of his mysterious emblem — for there was no other apparent cause — he became a man of awful power over souls that were in agony of sin. His converts always regarded him with a dread peculiar to themselves, affirming, though but figuratively, that, before he brought them to celestial light, they had been with him behind the black veil. Its gloom, indeed, enabled him to sympathize with all dark affections.

Dying sinners cried aloud for Mr. Hooper, and would not yield their breath till he appeared; though ever, as he stooped to whisper consolation, they shuddered at the veiled face so near their own. Such were the terrors of the black veil, even when Death had bared his visage! Strangers came long distances to attend service at his church, with the mere idle purpose of gazing at his figure, because it was forbidden them to behold his face. But many were made to quake ere they departed! Once, during Governor Belcher's administration, Mr. Hooper was appointed to preach the election sermon. Covered with his black veil, he stood before the chief magistrate, the council, and the representatives, and wrought so deep an impression, that the legislative measures of that year were characterized by all the gloom and piety of our earliest ancestral sway.

In this manner Mr. Hooper spent a long life, irreproachable in outward act, yet shrouded in dismal suspicions; kind and loving, though unloved, and dimly feared; a man apart from men, shunned in their health and joy, but ever summoned to their aid in mortal anguish. As years wore on, shedding their snows above his sable veil, he acquired a name throughout the New England churches, and they called him Father Hooper. Nearly all his parishioners, who were of mature age when he was settled, had been borne away by many a funeral; he had one congregation in the church, and a more crowded one in the churchyard; and having wrought so late into the evening, and done his work so well, it was now good Father Hooper's turn to rest.

Several persons were visible by the shaded candlelight, in the death chamber of the old clergyman. Natural connections he had none. But there was the decorously grave, though unmoved physician, seeking only to mitigate the last pangs of the patient whom he could not save. There were the deacons, and other eminently pious members of his church. There, also, was the Reverend Mr. Clark, of Westbury, a young and zealous divine, who had ridden in haste to pray by the bedside of the expiring minister. There was the nurse, no hired handmaiden of death, but one whose calm affection had endured thus long in secrecy, in solitude, amid the chill of age, and would not perish, even at the dying hour. Who, but Elizabeth! And there lay the hoary head of good Father Hooper upon the death pillow, with the black veil still swathed about his brow, and reaching down over his face, so that each more difficult gasp of his faint breath caused it to stir. All through life that piece of crape had hung between him and the world; it had separated him from cheerful brotherhood and

woman's love, and kept him in that saddest of all prisons, his own heart; and still it lay upon his face, as if to deepen the gloom of his darksome chamber, and shade him from the sunshine of eternity.

For some time previous, his mind had been confused, wavering doubtfully between the past and the present, and hovering forward, as it were, at intervals, into the indistinctness of the world to come. There had been feverish turns, which tossed him from side to side, and wore away what little strength he had. But in his most convulsive struggles, and in the wildest vagaries of his intellect, when no other thought retained its sober influence, he still showed an awful solicitude lest the black veil should slip aside. Even if his bewildered soul could have forgotten, there was a faithful woman at his pillow, who, with averted eyes, would have covered that aged face, which she had last beheld in the comeliness of manhood. At length the death-stricken old man lay quietly in the torpor of mental and bodily exhaustion, with an imperceptible pulse, and breath that grew fainter and fainter, except when a long, deep, and irregular inspiration seemed to prelude the flight of his spirit.

The minister of Westbury approached the bedside.

"Venerable Father Hooper," said he, "the moment of your release is at hand. Are you ready for the lifting of the veil that shuts in time from eternity?"

Father Hooper at first replied merely by a feeble motion of his head; then, apprehensive, perhaps, that his meaning might be doubtful, he exerted himself to speak.

"Yea," said he, in faint accents, "my soul hath a patient weariness until that veil be lifted."

"And is it fitting," resumed the Reverend Mr. Clark, "that a man so given to prayer, of such a blameless example, holy in deed and thought, so far as mortal judgment may pronounce; is it fitting that a father in the church should leave a shadow on his memory, that may seem to blacken a life so pure? I pray you, my venerable brother, let not this thing be! Suffer us to be gladdened by your triumphant aspect as you go to your reward. Before the veil of eternity be lifted, let me cast aside this black veil from your face!"

And thus speaking the Reverend Mr. Clark bent forward to reveal the mystery of so many years. But, exerting a sudden energy, that made all the beholders stand aghast, Father Hooper snatched both his hands from beneath the bedclothes, and pressed them strongly on the black veil, resolute to struggle, if the minister of Westbury would contend with a dying man.

## THE CASK OF AMONTILLADO

"The Cask of Amontillado" can be read in half an hour. If possible you should read it when you are sure of a half-hour secure from interruption, for in this story Poe is attempting to produce upon you that "single emotional effect" which can be achieved only when "the soul of the reader is at the writer's control." Each line, almost every word of the story, has been chosen by its author to build up this single effect, and any interruption of the growth of the story to its final horror is unfair to the writer who wrought his effect so carefully. Breaking into the story would be as unfair to Poe as an interruption is to a violinist who is in the midst of building up the emotional power of a beautiful sonata. Each is attempting to play upon your emotions; each requires an attention from you that is complete and unbroken.

THE THOUSAND injuries of Fortunato I had borne as best I could, but when he ventured upon insult, I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. *At length* I would be avenged; this was a point definitely settled — but the very definiteness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish, but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He had a weak point — this Fortunato — although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time and opportunity — to practice imposture upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmary Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack; but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially: I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season, that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore

motley. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him, "My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking today! But I have received a pipe of what passes for *amontillado*, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "*Amontillado*? A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full *amontillado* price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"*Amontillado*!"

"I have my doubts."

"*Amontillado*!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"*Amontillado*!"

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchesi. If anyone has a critical turn, it is he. He will tell me —"

"Luchesi cannot tell *amontillado* from sherry."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own."

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchesi —"

"I have no engagement — come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are incrustated with niter."

"Let us go nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. *Amontillado*! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchesi, he cannot distinguish sherry from *amontillado*."

Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm. Putting on a mask of black silk, and drawing a *roquelaure* closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my *palazzo*.

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honor of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit orders not to stir from the house. These orders were sufficient, I well knew, to insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.



I took from their sconces two flambeaux<sup>1</sup> and, giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long and winding staircase, requesting him to be cautious as he followed. We came at length to the foot of the descent and stood together on the damp ground of the catacombs of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," said he.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white webwork which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned toward me, and looked into my eyes with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Niter?" he asked at length.

"Niter," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh! — ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchesi —"

"Enough," he said; "the cough is a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

"True — true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily — but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damp."

Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mold.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

<sup>1</sup> flambeaux: torches.

"I forget your arms."<sup>1</sup>

"A huge human foot *d'or*,<sup>2</sup> in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are embedded in the heel."

"And the motto?"

"*Nemo me impune lacessit*."<sup>3</sup>

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through walls of piled bones, with casks and puncheons intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The niter!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough —"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grave. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed, and threw the bottle upward with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement — a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood?"

"How?"

"You are not of the masons."

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said.

"It is this," I answered, producing a trowel from beneath the folds of my roquelaure.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the *amontillado*."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the *amontillado*. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and, descending again, arrived at

<sup>1</sup> *arms*: coat of arms. <sup>2</sup> *d'or*: of gold. <sup>3</sup> *Nemo me impune lacessit*: No one attacks me without punishment. (Latin.)

a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another, less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones we perceived a still interior recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavored to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the *amontillado*. As for Luchesi —"

"He is an *ignoramus*," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more, and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key, I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the niter. Indeed it is *very* damp. Once more let me *implore* you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The *amontillado*!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the *amontillado*."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered

that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was *not* the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labors and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the masonwork, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated — I trembled. Unsheathing my rapier, I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall. I replied to the yells of him who clamored. I re-echoed — I aided — I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamor grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth, and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said:

"Ha! ha! ha! — he! he! he! — a very good joke indeed — an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the *palazzo* — he! he! he! — over our wine — he! he! he!"

"The *amontillado*!" I said.

"He! he! he! — he! he! he! — yes, the *amontillado*. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the *palazzo* — the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, *Montresor*!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud —

" Fortunato! "

No answer. I called again —

" Fortunato! "

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only the jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick — on account of the dampness of the catacombs. I hastened to make an end of my labor. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace requiescat.*<sup>1</sup>

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Did you feel the horror Poe expected you to feel? If not, for you the story is a failure. Point out the details in the action with which Poe builds up the feeling of horror to a climax. Why is the toast, " And I to your long life," particularly horrible? What details of the setting in this story contribute to the desired effect?

2. Are the two opposing forces physical or mental in the plot of this story? Justify your answer.

3. Have you seen any motion-picture dramas recently whose purpose was to create horror? What advantage does the motion picture have over a story in creating an emotional effect?

4. Relate some experience of your own with the intention of creating in your readers a single emotional effect such as horror, amusement, pity, fear (perhaps a ghost story), righteous indignation.

5. Read others of Poe's stories, both for enjoyment and to see the different kinds he wrote. as described on page 49.

6. Vocabulary: impunity, retribution, immolation, virtuoso, motley, roquelaure, niter, catacombs.

#### For Your Vocabulary

7. The narrator laid his plot on Fortunato's pride in his "*connoisseurship* in wine" (page 86). A *connoisseur* is a person who knows some particular field so well that he is an expert judge of matters relating to it. Can you think of other fields in which a person may be a *connoisseur*? In time of war you hear a great deal about *reconnoitering* patrols — patrols sent out to get acquainted with the lay of the land and the position of the enemy, to know what lies ahead. Do you see the relationship between the two words? But we *reconnoiter* for other less serious purposes. Watch for other examples of *reconnoitering* which you will find as you read this book

<sup>1</sup> *In pace requiescat*: May he rest in peace. (Latin.)

## THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (1836-1907)

Aldrich is an old friend to those who have met him as Tom Bailey in the delightful pages of *The Story of a Bad Boy*. In his stories we find the compactness and directness of Poe seasoned with a Gallic spice that suggests the French masters who imitated Poe and whom in turn Aldrich followed.

In spite of the fact that Aldrich held the dignified position of editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, he always remained a boy at heart; and it is, therefore, not surprising that his two chief contributions to American literature suggest perennial youthfulness. *The Story of a Bad Boy* is dear to the heart of every American boy; and Aldrich's second contribution, the surprise ending, is a kind of literary practical joke such as a boy would love to play.

## A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE

In "A Struggle for Life," published in the *Atlantic* in 1867, six years before the more famous "Marjorie Daw," Aldrich outdid himself with a double-barreled surprise; so as you read be prepared for anything.

ONE MORNING last April, as I was passing through Boston Common, which lies pleasantly between my residence and my office, I met a gentleman lounging along The Mall. I am generally preoccupied when walking, and often thrid my way through crowded streets without distinctly observing a single soul. But this man's face forced itself upon me, and a very singular face it was. His eyes were faded, and his hair, which he wore long, was flecked with gray. His hair and eyes, if I may say so, were seventy years old, the rest of him not thirty. The youthfulness of his figure, the elasticity of his gait, and the venerable appearance of his head were incongruities that drew more than one pair of curious eyes toward him. He was evidently an American — the New England cut of countenance is unmistakable — evidently a man who had seen something of the world; but strangely old and young.

Before reaching the Park Street gate, I had taken up the thread of thought which he had unconsciously broken; yet throughout the day this old young man, with his unwrinkled brow and silvered locks, glided in like a phantom between me and my duties.

The next morning I again encountered him on The Mall. He was resting lazily on the green rails, watching two little sloops in distress,

which two ragged shipowners had consigned to the mimic perils of the Pond. The vessels lay becalmed in the middle of the ocean, displaying a tantalizing lack of sympathy with the frantic helplessness of the owners on shore. As the gentleman observed their dilemma, a light came into his faded eyes, then died out, leaving them drearier than before. I wondered if he, too, in his time, had sent out ships that drifted and drifted and never came to port; and if these poor toys were to him types of his own losses.

"I would like to know that man's story," I said, half aloud, halting in one of those winding paths which branch off from the quietness of the Pond, and end in the rush and tumult of Tremont Street.

"Would you?" replied a voice at my side. I turned and faced Mr. H——, a neighbor of mine, who laughed heartily at finding me talking to myself. "Well," he added, reflectively, "I can tell you this man's story; and if you will match the narrative with anything as curious, I shall be glad to hear it."

"You know him, then?"

"Yes and no. I happened to be in Paris when he was buried."

"Buried!"

"Well, strictly speaking, not buried: but something quite like it. If you've a spare half-hour," continued my interlocutor, "we'll sit on this bench, and I will tell you all I know of an affair that made some noise in Paris a couple of years ago. The gentleman himself, standing yonder, will serve as a sort of frontispiece to the romance — a full-page illustration, as it were."

The following pages contain the story that Mr. H—— related to me. While he was telling it, a gentle wind arose; the miniature sloops drifted feebly about the ocean; the wretched owners flew from point to point, as the deceptive breeze promised to waft the barks to either shore; the early robins trilled now and then from the newly fringed elms; and the old young man leaned on the rail in the sunshine, wearily, little dreaming that two gossips were discussing his affairs within twenty yards of him.

Three people were sitting in a chamber whose one large window overlooked the Place Vendôme.<sup>1</sup> M. Dorine, with his back half turned on the other two occupants of the apartment, was reading the *Moniteur*, pausing from time to time to wipe his glasses, and taking scrupulous pains not to glance toward the lounge at his right, on which were seated Mademoiselle Dorine and a young American gen-

<sup>1</sup> Place Vendôme: a famous square in Paris.

tleman, whose handsome face rather frankly told his position in the family. There was not a happier man in Paris that afternoon than Philip Wentworth. Life had become so delicious to him that he shrank from looking beyond today. What could the future add to his full heart? what might it not take away? In certain natures the deepest joy has always something of melancholy in it, a presentiment, a fleeting sadness, a feeling without a name. Wentworth was conscious of this subtle shadow, that night, when he rose from the lounge, and thoughtfully held Julie's hand to his lip for a moment before parting. A careless observer would not have thought him, as he was, the happiest man in Paris.

M. Dorine laid down his paper and came forward. "If the house," he said, "is such as M. Martin describes it, I advise you to close with him at once. I would accompany you, Philip, but the truth is, I am too sad at losing this little bird to assist you in selecting a cage for her. Remember, the last train for town leaves at five. Be sure not to miss it; for we have seats for M. Sardou's<sup>1</sup> new comedy tomorrow night. By tomorrow night," he added laughingly, "little Julie here will be an old lady — 'tis such an age from now until then."

The next morning the train bore Philip to one of the loveliest spots within thirty miles of Paris. An hour's walk through green lanes brought him to M. Martin's estate. In a kind of dream the young man wandered from room to room, inspected the conservatory, the stables, the lawns, the strip of woodland through which a merry brook sang to itself continually; and, after dining with M. Martin, completed the purchase, and turned his steps toward the station, just in time to catch the express train.

As Paris stretched out before him, with its million lights twinkling in the early dusk, and its sharp spires here and there pricking the sky, it seemed to Philip as if years had elapsed since he left the city. On reaching Paris he drove to his hotel, where he found several letters lying on the table. He did not trouble himself even to glance at their superscriptions as he threw aside his traveling surtout for a more appropriate dress.

If, in his impatience to see Mademoiselle Dorine, the cars had appeared to walk, the fiacre which he had secured at the station appeared to creep. At last it turned into the Place Vendôme, and drew up before M. Dorine's residence. The door opened as Philip's foot touched the first step. The servant silently took his cloak and hat,

<sup>1</sup> **M. Sardou**: Victorien Sardou (1831-1908), popular French dramatist. "M." before all these names stands for Monsieur (mē-syū'), meaning Mr.



with a special deference, Philip thought; but was he not now one of the family?

"M. Dorine," said the servant slowly, "is unable to see Monsieur at present. He wishes Monsieur to be shown up to the *salon*."

"Is Mademoiselle —"

"Yes, Monsieur."

"Alone?"

"Alone, Monsieur," repeated the man, looking curiously at Philip, who could scarcely repress an exclamation of pleasure.

It was the first time that such a privilege had been accorded him. His interviews with Julie had always taken place in the presence of M. Dorine, or some members of the household. A well-bred Parisian girl has but a formal acquaintance with her lover.

Philip did not linger on the staircase; his heart sang in his bosom as he flew up the steps, two at a time. Ah! this wine of air which one drinks at twenty, and seldom after! He hastened through the softly lighted hall, in which he detected the faint scent of her favorite flowers, and stealthily opened the door of the *salon*.

The room was darkened. Underneath the chandelier stood a slim black casket on trestles. A lighted candle, a crucifix, and some white flowers were on a table near by. Julie Dorine was dead.

When M. Dorine heard the indescribable cry that rang through the silent house, he hurried from the library, and found Philip standing like a ghost in the middle of the chamber.

It was not until long afterward that Wentworth learned the details of the calamity that had befallen him. On the previous night Mademoiselle Dorine had retired to her room in seemingly perfect health. She dismissed her maid with a request to be awakened early the next morning. At the appointed hour the girl entered the chamber. Mademoiselle Dorine was sitting in an armchair, apparently asleep. The candle had burnt down to the socket; a book lay half open on the carpet at her feet. The girl started when she saw that the bed had not been occupied, and that her mistress still wore an evening dress. She rushed to Mademoiselle Dorine's side. It was not slumber. It was death.

Two messages were at once dispatched to Philip, one to the station at G——, the other to his hotel. The first missed him on the road, the second he had neglected to open. On his arrival at M. Dorine's house, the servant, under the supposition that Wentworth had been advised of Mademoiselle Dorine's death, broke the intelligence with awkward cruelty, by showing him directly to the *salon*.

Mademoiselle Dorine's wealth, her beauty, the suddenness of her death, and the romance that had in some way attached itself to her love for the young American, drew crowds to witness the final ceremonies which took place in the church in the Rue <sup>1</sup> d'Aguesseau. The body was to be laid in M. Dorine's tomb, in the cemetery of Montmartre.

This tomb requires a few words of description. First, there was a grating of filigrained iron; through this you looked into a small vestibule or hall, at the end of which was a massive door of oak opening upon a short flight of stone steps descending into the tomb. The vault was fifteen or twenty feet square, ingeniously ventilated from the ceiling, but unlighted. It contained two sarcophagi; the first held the remains of Madame Dorine, long since dead; the other was new, and bore on one side the letters J. D., in monogram, interwoven with fleurs-de-lis.

The funeral train stopped at the gate of the small garden that enclosed the place of burial, only the immediate relatives following the bearers into the tomb. A slender wax candle, such as is used in Catholic churches, burnt at the foot of the uncovered sarcophagus, casting a dim glow over the center of the apartment, and deepening the shadows which seemed to huddle together in the corners. By this flickering light the coffin was placed in its granite shell, the heavy slab laid over it reverently, and the oaken door revolved on its rusty hinges, shutting out the uncertain ray of sunshine that had ventured to peep in on the darkness.

M. Dorine, muffled in his cloak, threw himself on the back seat of the carriage, too abstracted in his grief to observe that he was the only occupant of the vehicle. There was a sound of wheels grating on the graveled avenue, and then all was silence again in the cemetery of Montmartre. At the main entrance the carriages parted company, dashing off into various streets at a pace that seemed to express a sense of relief. The band plays a dead march going to the grave, but *Fra Diavolo* <sup>2</sup> coming from it.

It is not with the retreating carriages that our interest lies. Nor yet wholly with the dead in her mysterious dream; but with Philip Wentworth.

The rattle of wheels had died out of the air when Philip opened his eyes, bewildered, like a man abruptly roused from slumber. He raised himself on one arm and stared into the surrounding blackness. Where

<sup>1</sup> Rue: Street. <sup>2</sup> *Fra Diavolo*: an opera with gay, vivacious music, based on the life of a famous Italian brigand.

was he? In a second the truth flashed upon him. He had been left in the tomb! While kneeling on the farther side of the stone box, perhaps he had fainted, and in the last solemn rites his absence had been unnoticed.

His first emotion was one of natural terror. But this passed as quickly as it came. Life had ceased to be so very precious to him; and if it were his fate to die at Julie's side, was not that the fulfillment of the desire which he had expressed to himself a hundred times that morning? What did it matter, a few years sooner or later? He must lay down the burden at last. Why not then? A pang of self-reproach followed the thought. Could he so lightly throw aside the love that had bent over his cradle? The sacred name of mother rose involuntarily to his lips. Was it not cowardly to yield up without a struggle the life which he should guard for her sake? Was it not his duty to the living and the dead to face the difficulties of his position, and overcome them if it were within human power?

With an organization as delicate as a woman's, he had that spirit which, however sluggish in repose, can leap with a kind of exultation to measure its strength with disaster. The vague fear of the supernatural, that would affect most men in a similar situation, found no room in his heart. He was simply shut in a chamber from which it was necessary that he should obtain release within a given period. That this chamber contained the body of the woman he loved, so far from adding to the terror of the case, was a circumstance from which he drew consolation. She was a beautiful white statue now. Her soul was far hence; and if that pure spirit could return, would it not be to shield him with her love? It was impossible that the place should not engender some thought of the kind. He did not put the thought entirely from him as he rose to his feet and stretched out his hands in the darkness; but his mind was too healthy and practical to indulge long in such speculations.

Philip chanced to have in his pocket a box of wax tapers which smokers use. After several ineffectual attempts, he succeeded in igniting one against the dank wall, and by its momentary glare perceived that the candle had been left in the tomb. This would serve him in examining the fastenings of the vault. If he could force the inner door by any means, and reach the grating, of which he had an indistinct recollection, he might hope to make himself heard. But the oaken door was immovable, as solid as the wall itself, into which it fitted airtight. Even if he had had the requisite tools, there were no fastenings to be removed; the hinges were set on the outside.

Having ascertained this, he replaced the candle on the floor, and leaned against the wall thoughtfully, watching the blue fan of flame that wavered to and fro, threatening to detach itself from the wick. "At all events," he thought, "the place is ventilated." Suddenly Philip sprang forward and extinguished the light. His existence depended on that candle!

He had read somewhere, in some account of shipwreck, how the survivors had lived for days upon a few candles which one of the passengers had insanely thrown into the longboat. And here he had been burning away his very life.

By the transient illumination of one of the tapers, he looked at his watch. It had stopped at eleven — but at eleven that day or the preceding night? The funeral, he knew, had left the church at ten. How many hours had passed since then? Of what duration had been his swoon? Alas! It was no longer possible for him to measure those hours which crawl like snails to the wretched, and fly like swallows over the happy.

He picked up the candle, and seated himself on the stone steps. He was a sanguine man, this Wentworth, but, as he weighed the chances of escape, the prospect did not seem encouraging. Of course he would be missed. His disappearance under the circumstances would surely alarm his friends; they would instigate a search for him; but who would think of searching for a live man in the cemetery of Montmartre? The Prefect of Police would set a hundred intelligences at work to find him; the Seine might be dragged, *les misérables*<sup>1</sup> turned over at the deadhouse; a minute description of him would be in every detective's pocket and he — in M. Dorine's family tomb!

Yet, on the other hand, it was here he was last seen; from this point a keen detective would naturally work up the case. Then might not the undertaker return for the candlestick, probably not left by design? Or, again, might not M. Dorine send fresh wreaths of flowers, to take the place of those which now diffused a pungent, aromatic odor throughout the chamber? Ah! what unlikely chances! But if one of these things did not happen speedily, it had better never happen. How long could he keep life in himself?

With unaccelerated pulse, he quietly cut the half-burned candle into four equal parts. "Tonight," he meditated, "I will eat the first of these pieces; tomorrow, the second; tomorrow evening, the third; the next day, the fourth; and then — then I'll wait! "

He had taken no breakfast that morning, unless a cup of coffee can

<sup>1</sup> *les misérables*: the unfortunates.

be called a breakfast. He had never been very hungry before. He was ravenously hungry now. But he postponed the meal as long as practicable. It must have been near midnight, according to his calculation, when he determined to try the first of his four singular repasts. The bit of white wax was tasteless; but it served its purpose.

His appetite for the time appeased, he found a new discomfort. The humidity of the walls, and the wind that crept through the unseen ventilator, chilled him to the bone. To keep walking was his only resource. A sort of drowsiness, too, occasionally came over him. It took all his will to fight it off. To sleep, he felt, was to die: and he had made up his mind to live.

Very strange fancies flitted through his head as he groped up and down the stone floor of the dungeon, feeling his way along the wall to avoid the sepulchers. Voices that had long been silent spoke words that had long been forgotten; faces he had known in childhood grew palpable against the dark. His whole life in detail was unrolled before him like a panorama; the changes of a year, with its burden of love and death, its sweets and its bitternesses, were epitomized in a single second. The desire to sleep had left him. But the keen hunger came again.

It must be near morning now, he mused; perhaps the sun is just gilding the pinnacles and domes of the city; or, maybe, a dull, drizzling rain is beating on Paris, sobbing on these mounds above me. Paris! It seems like a dream. Did I ever walk in its gay streets in the golden air? Oh, the delight and pain and passion of that sweet human life!

Philip became conscious that the gloom, the silence, and the cold were gradually conquering him. The feverish activity of his brain brought on a reaction. He grew lethargic, he sank down on the steps, and thought of nothing. His hand fell by chance on one of the pieces of candle; he grasped it and devoured it mechanically. This revived him. "How strange," he thought, "that I am not thirsty. Is it possible that the dampness of the walls, which I must inhale with every breath, has supplied the need of water? Not a drop has passed my lips for two days, and still I experience no thirst. That drowsiness, thank Heaven, has gone. I think I was never wide awake until this hour. It would be an anodyne like poison that could weigh down my eyelids. No doubt the dread of sleep has something to do with this."

The minutes were like hours. Now he walked as briskly as he

dared up and down the tomb; now he rested against the door. More than once he was tempted to throw himself upon the stone coffin that held Julie, and make no further struggle for his life.

Only one piece of candle remained. He had eaten the third portion, not to satisfy hunger, but from a precautionary motive. He had taken it as a man takes some disagreeable drug upon the result of which hangs safety. The time was rapidly approaching when even this poor substitute for nourishment would be exhausted. He delayed that moment. He gave himself a long fast this time. The half inch of candle which he held in his hand was a sacred thing to him. It was his last defense against death.

At length, with such a sinking at heart as he had not known before, he raised it to his lips. Then he paused, then he hurled the fragment across the tomb, then the oaken door was flung open, and Philip, with dazzled eyes, saw M. Dorine's form sharply outlined against the blue sky.

When they led him out, half-blinded, into the broad daylight, M. Dorine noticed that Philip's hair, which a short time since was as black as a crow's wing, had actually turned gray in places. The man's eyes, too, had faded; the darkness had spoiled their luster.

"And how long was he really confined in the tomb?" I asked, as Mr. H—— concluded the story.

"*Just one hour and twenty minutes!*" replied Mr. H——, smiling blandly.

As he spoke, the little sloops, with their sails all blown out like white roses, came floating bravely into port, and Philip Wentworth lounged by us, wearily, in the pleasant April sunshine.

Mr. H——'s narrative made a deep impression on me. Here was a man who had undergone a strange ordeal. Here was a man whose sufferings were unique. His was no threadbare experience. Eighty minutes had seemed like two days to him! If he had really been immured two days in the tomb, the story, from my point of view, would have lost its tragic element.

After this it was but natural I should regard Mr. Wentworth with deepened interest. As I met him from day to day, passing through the Common with that same abstracted air, there was something in his loneliness which touched me. I wondered that I had not before read in his pale meditative face some such sad history as Mr. H—— had confided to me. I formed the resolution of speaking to him, though with what purpose was not very clear to my mind. One May morning

we met at the intersection of two paths. He courteously halted to allow me the precedence.

"Mr. Wentworth —" I began.

He interrupted me.

"My name, sir," he said, in an offhand manner, "is Jones."

"Jo-Jo-Jones!" I gasped.

"Not Joe Jones," he returned coldly, "Frederick."

Mr. Jones, or whatever his name is, will never know, unless he reads these pages, why a man accosted him one morning as "Mr. Wentworth," and then abruptly rushed down the nearest path, and disappeared in the crowd.

The fact is, I had been duped by Mr. H——, who is a gentleman of literary proclivities, and has, it is whispered, become somewhat demented in brooding over the Great American Novel — not yet hatched. He had actually tried the effect of one of his chapters on me!

My hero, as I subsequently learned, is no hero at all, but a commonplace young man who has some connection with the building of that pretty granite bridge which will shortly span the crooked little lake in the Public Garden.

When I think of the cool ingenuity and readiness with which Mr. H—— built up his airy fabric on my credulity, I am half inclined to laugh; though I feel not slightly irritated at having been the unresisting victim of his Black Art.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What was the author's purpose in writing this story?
2. In your case how successful was the double surprise? There are two tests of a good surprise ending: (a) You should not be able to see it coming; (b) You should be obliged to admit, on looking back over the story, that all the necessary clues were there.
3. Have you ever seen George M. Cohan's play *Seven Keys to Baldpate*? In what way is the play similar to Aldrich's story?
4. Of the French writers who influenced Aldrich the best known is Guy de Maupassant. You might be interested in his collection *The Odd Number*.
5. Read "Marjorie Daw" and others of Aldrich's surprise ending stories. Are you always surprised?
6. Name two of Aldrich's successors who made use of the surprise ending. What stories of theirs can you find which illustrate this device?
7. Vocabulary: Mall, dilemma, subtle, surtout, fiacre, lethargic, sarcophagus.

*For Your Vocabulary*

8. Aldrich calls the friend who breaks into his musings about the strange old young man to tell his tall tale an *interlocutor* (page 94), meaning simply that he opens a conversation. If you have seen minstrel shows, you can appreciate the use of the term *interlocutor* for the man in the middle who starts all the little exchanges of humorous talk with the end men. We have other words built on the same root meaning to speak aloud, some of which developed from forms that use other spellings. *Elocution*, which you doubtless know, uses the same form as *interlocutor*; but two other words of the same family, *colloquial* (page 929) and *loquacious* (page 153), use a slightly different form. *Colloquial* developed from *colloquy*, which means conversation. So "colloquial talents" are talents for conversation. A colloquial word or expression is one that is proper enough used in speaking but not proper for formal writing. A *loquacious* person is one fond of talking a great deal. What sort of speech is a *soliloquy*?

## BRET HARTE (1836-1902)

As founder and editor of the *Overland Monthly* Bret Harte gave the stimulus which probably started a line of famous writers of the American Far West. And yet, strangely enough, Harte was not a true Westerner. During his seventeen years in California he considered himself an exile. To him the "great open spaces" had no such appeal as the literary and artistic circles of the metropolis. He had spent his first twenty years in New York, and it was to New York he gladly returned when public favor brought him relief from financial worries. At the height of his career the *Atlantic Monthly* made him a contributing editor with an annual salary of \$10,000 for whatever he might condescend to write for that magazine. Few American writers have ever had a more spectacular success.

## THE OUTCASTS OF POKER FLAT

When the Far West came into the short story, "local color" came with it: perilous mountain roads, highwaymen, gamblers, frontier chivalry, frontier "cussin'," and the full-bodied tang of frontier humor. Bret Harte became famous with his stories of California in the fifties. His characters are taken from the gold mines, from the camps of the forty-niners, and from the settlements that grew out of them. Opening a vein of story material that has increased tremendously in popularity—and decreased as



tremendously in its excellence — Bret Harte was first with the localized romance of the wild and woolly West.

This is perhaps Bret Harte's best story. It is not so funny as some, but it does contain finer characterizations than Harte usually achieved.

AS Mr. John Oakhurst, gambler, stepped into the main street of Poker Flat on the morning of the twenty-third of November, 1850, he was conscious of a change in its moral atmosphere since the preceding night. Two or three men, conversing earnestly together, ceased as he approached, and exchanged significant glances. There was a Sabbath lull in the air, which, in a settlement unused to Sabbath influences, looked ominous.

Mr. Oakhurst's calm, handsome face betrayed small concern in these indications. Whether he was conscious of any predisposing cause was another question. "I reckon they're after somebody," he reflected; "likely it's me." He returned to his pocket the handkerchief with which he had been whipping away the red dust of Poker Flat from his neat boots, and quietly discharged his mind of any further conjecture.

In point of fact, Poker Flat was "after somebody." It had lately suffered the loss of several thousand dollars, two valuable horses, and a prominent citizen. It was experiencing a spasm of virtuous reaction, quite as lawless and ungovernable as any of the acts that had provoked it. A secret committee had determined to rid the town of all improper persons. This was done permanently in regard to two men who were then hanging from the boughs of a sycamore in the gulch, and temporarily in the banishment of certain other objectionable characters. I regret to say that some of these were ladies. It is but due to the sex, however, to state that their impropriety was professional, and it was only in such easily established standards of evil that Poker Flat ventured to sit in judgment.

Mr. Oakhurst was right in supposing that he was included in this category. A few of the committee had urged hanging him as a possible example and a sure method of reimbursing themselves from his pockets of the sums he had won from them. "It's agin justice," said Jim Wheeler, "to let this yer young man from Roaring Camp — an entire stranger — carry away our money." But a crude sentiment of equity residing in the breasts of those who had been fortunate enough to win from Mr. Oakhurst overruled this narrower local prejudice.

Mr. Oakhurst received his sentence with philosophic calmness, none the less coolly that he was aware of the hesitation of his judges. He

was too much of a gambler not to accept fate. With him life was at best an uncertain game, and he recognized the usual percentage in favor of the dealer.

A body of armed men accompanied the deported wickedness of Poker Flat to the outskirts of the settlement. Besides Mr. Oakhurst, who was known to be a coolly desperate man, and for whose intimidation the armed escort was intended, the expatriated party consisted of a young woman familiarly known as "The Duchess"; another who had won the title of "Mother Shipton"; and "Uncle Billy," a suspected sluice robber and confirmed drunkard. The cavalcade provoked no comments from the spectators, nor was any word uttered by the escort. Only when the gulch which marked the uttermost limit of Poker Flat was reached, the leader spoke briefly and to the point. The exiles were forbidden to return at the peril of their lives.

As the escort disappeared, their pent-up feelings found vent in a few hysterical tears from the Duchess, some bad language from Mother Shipton, and a Parthian<sup>1</sup> volley of expletives from Uncle Billy. The philosophic Oakhurst alone remained silent. He listened calmly to Mother Shipton's desire to cut somebody's heart out, to the repeated statements of the Duchess that she would die in the road, and to the alarming oaths that seemed to be bumped out of Uncle Billy as he rode forward. With the easy good humor characteristic of his class, he insisted upon exchanging his own riding horse, "Five-Spot," for the sorry mule which the Duchess rode. But even this act did not draw the party into any closer sympathy. The young woman readjusted her somewhat draggled plumes with a feeble, faded coquetry; Mother Shipton eyed the possessor of Five-Spot with malevolence, and Uncle Billy included the whole party in one sweeping anathema.

The road to Sandy Bar — a camp that, not having as yet experienced the regenerating influences of Poker Flat, consequently seemed to offer some invitation to the emigrants — lay over a steep mountain range. It was distant a day's severe travel. In that advanced season the party soon passed out of the moist, temperate regions of the foothills into the dry, cold, bracing air of the Sierras. The trail was narrow and difficult. At noon the Duchess, rolling out of her saddle upon the ground, declared her intention of going no farther, and the party halted.

<sup>1</sup> **Parthian:** The Parthians were an ancient people who shot their arrows while fleeing.

The spot was singularly wild and impressive. A wooded amphitheater, surrounded on three sides by precipitous cliffs of naked granite, sloped gently toward the crest of another precipice that overlooked the valley. It was, undoubtedly, the most suitable spot for a camp, had camping been advisable. But Mr. Oakhurst knew that scarcely half the journey to Sandy Bar was accomplished, and the party were not equipped or provisioned for delay. This fact he pointed out to his companions curtly, with a philosophic commentary on the folly of "throwing up their hand before the game was played out." But they were furnished with liquor, which in this emergency stood them in place of food, fuel, rest, and prescience. In spite of his remonstrances, it was not long before they were more or less under its influence. Uncle Billy passed rapidly from a bellicose state into one of stupor, the Duchess became maudlin, and Mother Shipton snored. Mr. Oakhurst alone remained erect, leaning against a rock, calmly surveying them.

Mr. Oakhurst did not drink. It interfered with a profession which required coolness, impassiveness, and presence of mind, and, in his own language, he "couldn't afford it." As he gazed at his recumbent fellow exiles, the loneliness begotten of his pariah trade, his habits of life, his very vices, for the first time seriously oppressed him. He bestirred himself in dusting his black clothes, washing his hands and face, and other acts characteristic of his studiously neat habits, and for a moment forgot his annoyance. The thought of deserting his weaker and more pitiable companions never perhaps occurred to him. Yet he could not help feeling the want of that excitement which, singularly enough, was most conducive to that calm equanimity for which he was notorious. He looked at the gloomy walls that rose a thousand feet sheer above the circling pines around him, at the sky ominously clouded, at the valley below, already deepening into shadow; and, doing so, suddenly he heard his own name called.

A horseman slowly ascended the trail. In the fresh, open face of the newcomer Mr. Oakhurst recognized Tom Simson, otherwise known as "The Innocent," of Sandy Bar. He had met him sometime before over a "little game," and had, with perfect equanimity, won the entire fortune — amounting to some forty dollars — of that guileless youth. After the game was finished, Mr. Oakhurst drew the youthful speculator behind the door and thus addressed him: "Tommy, you're a good little man, but you can't gamble worth a cent. Don't try it over again." He then handed him his money back, pushed him gently from the room, and so made a devoted slave of Tom Simson.

There was a remembrance of this in his boyish and enthusiastic greeting of Mr. Oakhurst. He had started, he said, to go to Poker Flat to seek his fortune. "Alone?" No, not exactly alone; in fact (a giggle), he had run away with Piney Woods. Didn't Mr. Oakhurst remember Piney? She that used to wait on the table at the Temperance House? They had been engaged a long time, but old Jake Woods had objected, and so they had run away, and were going to Poker Flat to be married, and here they were. And they were tired out, and how lucky it was they had found a place to camp, and company. All this the Innocent delivered rapidly, while Piney, a stout, comely damsel of fifteen, emerged from behind the pine tree, where she had been blushing unseen, and rode to the side of her lover.

Mr. Oakhurst seldom troubled himself with sentiment, still less with propriety; but he had a vague idea that the situation was not fortunate. He retained, however, his presence of mind sufficiently to kick Uncle Billy, who was about to say something, and Uncle Billy was sober enough to recognize in Mr. Oakhurst's kick a superior power that would not bear trifling. He then endeavored to dissuade Tom Simson from delaying further, but in vain. He even pointed out the fact that there was no provision, nor means of making a camp. But, unluckily, the Innocent met this objection by assuring the party that he was provided with an extra mule loaded with provisions, and by the discovery of a rude attempt at a log house near the trail. "Piney can stay with Mrs. Oakhurst," said the Innocent, pointing to the Duchess, "and I can shift for myself."

Nothing but Mr. Oakhurst's admonishing foot saved Uncle Billy from bursting into a roar of laughter. As it was, he felt compelled to retire up the canyon until he could recover his gravity. There he confided the joke to the tall pine trees, with many slaps of his leg, contortions of his face, and the usual profanity. But when he returned to the party, he found them seated by a fire — for the air had grown strangely chill and the sky overcast — in apparently amicable conversation. Piney was actually talking in an impulsive girlish fashion to the Duchess, who was listening with an interest and animation she had not shown for many days. The Innocent was holding forth, apparently with equal effect, to Mr. Oakhurst and Mother Shipton, who was actually relaxing into amiability. "Is this yer a d——d picnic?" said Uncle Billy, with inward scorn, as he surveyed the sylvan group, the glancing firelight, and the tethered animals in the foreground. Suddenly an idea mingled with the alcoholic fumes that disturbed his brain. It was apparently of a jocular nature, for he felt impelled to slap his leg again and cram his fist into his mouth.

As the shadows crept slowly up the mountain, a slight breeze rocked the tops of the pine trees and moaned through their long and gloomy aisles. The ruined cabin, patched and covered with pine boughs, was set apart for the ladies. As the lovers parted, they unaffectedly exchanged a kiss, so honest and sincere that it might have been heard above the swaying pines. The frail Duchess and the malevolent Mother Shipton were probably too stunned to remark upon this last evidence of simplicity, and so turned without a word to the hut. The fire was replenished, the men lay down before the door, and in a few minutes were asleep.

Mr. Oakhurst was a light sleeper. Toward morning he awoke benumbed and cold. As he stirred the dying fire, the wind, which was now blowing strongly, brought to his cheek that which caused the blood to leave it — snow!

He started to his feet with the intention of awakening the sleepers, for there was no time to lose. But, turning to where Uncle Billy had been lying, he found him gone. A suspicion leaped to his brain, and a curse to his lips. He ran to the spot where the mules had been tethered — they were no longer there. The tracks were already rapidly disappearing in the snow.

The momentary excitement brought Mr. Oakhurst back to the fire with his usual calm. He did not waken the sleepers. The Innocent slumbered peacefully, with a smile on his good-humored, freckled face: the virgin Piney slept beside her frailer sisters as sweetly as though attended by celestial guardians; and Mr. Oakhurst, drawing his blanket over his shoulders, stroked his mustaches and waited for the dawn. It came slowly in a whirling mist of snowflakes that dazzled and confused the eye. What could be seen of the landscape appeared magically changed. He looked over the valley, and summed up the present and future in two words, "Snowed in!"

A careful inventory of the provisions, which, fortunately for the party, had been stored within the hut, and so escaped the felonious fingers of Uncle Billy, disclosed the fact that with care and prudence they might last ten days longer. "That is," said Mr. Oakhurst *sotto voce*<sup>1</sup> to the Innocent, "if you're willing to board us. If you ain't — and perhaps you'd better not — you can wait till Uncle Billy gets back with provisions." For some occult reason, Mr. Oakhurst could not bring himself to disclose Uncle Billy's rascality, and so offered the hypothesis that he had wandered from the camp and had accidentally stampeded the animals. He dropped a warning to the Duchess and

<sup>1</sup> *sotto voce*: in an undertone. (sôt'tò vō'châ; Italian.)

Mother Shipton, who of course knew the facts of their associate's defection. "They'll find out the truth about us *all* when they find out anything," he added significantly, "and there's no good frightening them now."

Tom Simson not only put all his worldly store at the disposal of Mr. Oakhurst, but seemed to enjoy the prospect of their enforced seclusion. "We'll have a good camp for a week, and then the snow'll melt, and we'll all go back together." The cheerful gaiety of the young man and Mr. Oakhurst's calm infected the others. The Innocent, with the aid of pine boughs, extemporized a thatch for the roofless cabin, and the Duchess directed Piney in the rearrangement of the interior with a taste and tact that opened the blue eyes of that provincial maiden to their fullest extent. "I reckon now you're used to fine things at Poker Flat," said Piney. The Duchess turned away sharply to conceal something that reddened her cheeks through their professional tint, and Mother Shipton requested Piney not to "chatter." But when Mr. Oakhurst returned from a weary search for the trail, he heard the sound of happy laughter echoed from the rocks. He stopped in some alarm, and his thoughts first naturally reverted to the whisky, which he had prudently cached. "And yet it don't somehow sound like whisky," said the gambler. It was not until he caught sight of the blazing fire through the still blind storm, and the group around it, that he settled to the conviction that it was "square fun."

Whether Mr. Oakhurst had cached his cards with the whisky as something debarred the free access of the community, I cannot say. It was certain that, in Mother Shipton's words, he "didn't say 'cards' once" during that evening. Haply the time was beguiled by an accordion, produced somewhat ostentatiously by Tom Simson from his pack. Notwithstanding some difficulties attending the manipulation of this instrument, Piney Woods managed to pluck several reluctant melodies from its keys, to an accompaniment by the Innocent on a pair of bone castanets. But the crowning festivity of the evening was reached in a rude camp-meeting hymn, which the lovers, joining hands, sang with great earnestness and vociferation. I fear that a certain defiant tone and Covenanters'<sup>1</sup> swing to its chorus, rather than any devotional quality, caused it speedily to infect the others, who at last joined in the refrain:

"I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,  
And I'm bound to die in His army."

<sup>1</sup> **Covenanters:** in seventeenth-century Scotland, adherents of the Presbyterian Covenant to resist the rule of the Anglican Church.

The pines rocked, the storm eddied and whirled above the miserable group, and the flames of their altar leaped heavenward, as if in token of the vow.

At midnight the storm abated, the rolling clouds parted, and the stars glittered keenly above the sleeping camp. Mr. Oakhurst, whose professional habits had enabled him to live on the smallest possible amount of sleep, in dividing the watch with Tom Simson somehow managed to take upon himself the greater part of that duty. He excused himself to the Innocent by saying that he had "often been a week without sleep." "Doing what?" asked Tom. "Poker!" replied Oakhurst sententiously. "When a man gets a streak of luck, he don't get tired. The luck gives in first. Luck," continued the gambler reflectively, "is a mighty queer thing. All you know about it for certain is that it's bound to change. And it's finding out when it's going to change that makes you. We've had a streak of bad luck since we left Poker Flat — you come along, and slap, you get into it, too. If you can hold your cards right along you're all right. For," added the gambler, with cheerful irrelevance,

"I'm proud to live in the service of the Lord,  
And I'm bound to die in His army."

The third day came, and the sun, looking through the white-curtained valley, saw the outcasts dividing their slowly decreasing store of provisions for the morning meal. It was one of the peculiarities of that mountain climate that its rays diffused a kindly warmth over the wintry landscape, as if in regretful commiseration of the past. But it revealed drift on drift of snow piled high around the hut — a hopeless, uncharted, trackless sea of white lying below the rocky shores to which the castaways still clung. Through the marvelously clear air the smoke of the pastoral village of Poker Flat rose miles away. Mother Shipton saw it, and from a remote pinnacle of her rocky fastness hurled in that direction a final malediction. It was her last vituperative attempt, and perhaps for that reason was invested with a certain degree of sublimity. It did her good, she privately informed the Duchess. "Just you go out there and cuss, and see." She then set herself to the task of amusing "the child," as she and the Duchess were pleased to call Piney. Piney was no chicken, but it was a soothing and original theory of the pair thus to account for the fact that she didn't swear and wasn't improper.

When night crept up again through the gorges, the reedy notes of the accordion rose and fell in fitful spasms and long-drawn gasps by

the flickering campfire. But music failed to fill entirely the aching void left by insufficient food, and a new diversion was proposed by Piney — storytelling. Neither Mr. Oakhurst nor his female companions caring to relate their personal experiences, this plan would have failed too, but for the Innocent. Some months before he had chanced upon a stray copy of Mr. Pope's ingenious translation of the *Iliad*. He now proposed to narrate the principal incidents of that poem — having thoroughly mastered the argument and fairly forgotten the words — in the current vernacular of Sandy Bar. And so for the rest of that night the Homeric demigods again walked the earth. Trojan bully and wily Greek wrestled in the winds, and the great pines in the canyon seemed to bow to the wrath of the son of Peleus.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Oakhurst listened with great satisfaction. Most especially was he interested in the fate of "Ash-heels," as the Innocent persisted in denominating the "swift-footed Achilles."

So, with small food and much of Homer and the accordion, a week passed over the heads of the outcasts. The sun again forsook them, and again from leaden skies the snowflakes were sifted over the land. Day by day closer around them drew the snowy circle, until at last they looked from their prison over drifted walls of dazzling white, that towered twenty feet above their heads. It became more and more difficult to replenish their fires, even from the fallen trees beside them, now half hidden in the drifts. And yet no one complained. The lovers turned from the dreary prospect and looked into each other's eyes, and were happy. Mr. Oakhurst settled himself coolly to the losing game before him. The Duchess, more cheerful than she had been, assumed the care of Piney. Only Mother Shipton — once the strongest of the party — seemed to sicken and fade. At midnight on the tenth day she called Oakhurst to her side. "I'm going," she said, in a voice of querulous weakness, "but don't say anything about it. Don't waken the kids. Take the bundle from under my head, and open it." Mr. Oakhurst did so. It contained Mother Shipton's rations for the last week, untouched. "Give 'em to the child," she said, pointing to the sleeping Piney. "You've starved yourself," said the gambler. "That's what they call it," said the woman querulously, as she lay down again, and, turning her face to the wall, passed quietly away.

The accordion and the bones were put aside that day, and Homer was forgotten. When the body of Mother Shipton had been committed to the snow, Mr. Oakhurst took the Innocent aside, and

<sup>1</sup> son of Peleus: Achilles, the hero of the *Iliad*.



showed him a pair of snowshoes, which he had fashioned from the old packsaddle. "There's one chance in a hundred to save her yet," he said, pointing to Piney; "but it's there," he added, pointing toward Poker Flat. "If you can reach there in two days she's safe." "And you?" asked Tom Simson. "I'll stay here," was the curt reply.

The lovers parted with a long embrace. "You are not going, too?" said the Duchess, as she saw Mr. Oakhurst apparently waiting to accompany him. "As far as the canyon," he replied. He turned suddenly and kissed the Duchess, leaving her pallid face aflame, and her trembling limbs rigid with amazement.

Night came, but not Mr. Oakhurst. It brought the storm again and the whirling snow. Then the Duchess, feeding the fire, found someone had quietly piled beside the hut enough fuel to last a few days longer. The tears rose to her eyes, but she hid them from Piney.

The women slept but little. In the morning looking into each other's faces, they read their fate. Neither spoke, but Piney, accepting the position of the stronger, drew near and placed her arm around the Duchess's waist. They kept this attitude for the rest of the day. That night the storm reached its greatest fury, and, rending asunder the protecting vines, invaded the very hut.

Toward morning they found themselves unable to feed the fire, which gradually died away. As the embers slowly blackened, the Duchess crept closer to Piney, and broke the silence of many hours: "Piney, can you pray?" "No, dear," said Piney simply. The Duchess, without knowing exactly why, felt relieved, and, putting her head upon Piney's shoulder, spoke no more. And so reclining, the younger and purer pillowing the head of her soiled sister upon her virgin breast, they fell asleep.

The wind lulled as if it feared to waken them. Feathery drifts of snow, shaken from the long pine boughs, flew like white-winged birds, and settled about them as they slept. The moon through the rifted clouds looked down upon what had been the camp. But all human stain, all trace of earthly travail, was hidden beneath the spotless mantle mercifully flung from above.

They slept all that day and the next, nor did they waken when voices and footsteps broke the silence of the camp. And when pitying fingers brushed the snow from their wan faces, you could scarcely have told from the equal peace that dwelt upon them which was she that had sinned. Even the law of Poker Flat recognized this, and turned away, leaving them still locked in each other's arms.

But at the head of the gulch, on one of the largest pine trees, they

found the deuce of clubs pinned to the bark with a bowie knife. It bore the following, written in pencil in a firm hand:

BENEATH THIS TREE  
LIES THE BODY  
OF  
JOHN OAKHURST  
WHO STRUCK A STREAK OF BAD LUCK  
ON THE 23D OF NOVEMBER 1850,  
AND  
HANDED IN HIS CHECKS  
ON THE 7TH DECEMBER, 1850.

And pulseless and cold, with a Derringer by his side and a bullet in his heart, though still calm as in life, beneath the snow lay he who was at once the strongest and yet the weakest of the outcasts of Poker Flat.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. To what extent are the characters true to life? Why do you find it difficult to judge? Make a generalization about human nature which will explain the conduct of the outcasts.
2. What traces of Bret Harte's humor do you find in this story?
3. What details in the story give us a picture of California in the 1850's? Point out the phrases pertaining to the gambler's life found in the story.
4. In what ways do you consider Harte superior to Poe? to Hawthorne? In what ways inferior? To judge more adequately read "Tennessee's Partner" and other Harte stories.
5. Vocabulary: category, equity, expatriated, sluice, expletives, anathema, prescience, pariah, felonious, occult, hypothesis, defection, cached, irrelevance, malediction.

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

6. The outcasts take their expulsion in different ways that reveal their dispositions and characters, and Harte has some choice words to describe their reactions. One of the party is *bellicose* (page 106), or inclined to "go to war" (see the relation to *belligerent*?); another is *maudlin* (page 106), or tearfully emotional, a state often associated, as in this case, with drunkenness; another is *querulous* (page 111), or complaining; and another meets the crisis with *equanimity* (page 106), or a calm, even state of mind. Think about the meaning of each word, and see if you can recall without looking back in the story which character's reaction it described.

## JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (1848-1908)

Of the many writers who followed Bret Harte's lead in developing the local-color story, none opened a richer vein of story material than did Joel Chandler Harris with his old plantation tales in Negro dialect. Born in Georgia, Harris at thirteen undertook to learn the printer's trade in the shop of the *Countryman*, a newspaper printed on a plantation. Here he became familiar with the curious myths and animal stories of the plantation Negro. Later, when he was working for the *Atlanta Constitution*, he began telling these stories as a daily newspaper feature, like the familiar "column." As a mouthpiece for the tales, he created Uncle Remus, about whom he said, "He was not an invention of my own, but a human syndicate, I might say, of three or four old Negroes whom I had known. I just walloped them together into one person and called him 'Uncle Remus.'"

The measure of Harris's sincerity and artistry in bringing the Negro stories to print is the care he took to make Uncle Remus a believable, lovable character and the care he took, moreover, to preserve the true Negro dialect, sentence structure, and vernacular.

## THE AWFUL FATE OF MR. WOLF

The "Uncle Remus" stories made Joel Chandler Harris famous. Five volumes of them were published; but the best of them are in the first book, *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings*, published in 1880, from which the following story is taken. As you read, note how skillfully Harris provided a framework for the Brer Rabbit story. Perhaps the relationship between Uncle Remus and "Miss Sally's little boy" will interest you even more than the fable.

UNCLE REMUS was half-soling one of his shoes, and his Miss Sally's little boy had been handling his awls, his hammers, and his knives to such an extent that the old man was compelled to assume a threatening attitude; but peace reigned again, and the little boy perched himself on a chair, watching Uncle Remus driving in pegs.

"Folks w'at's allers pesterin' people, en bodderin' 'longer dat wa't ain't dern, don't never come ter no good cend. Dar wuz Brer Wolf; stidder mindin' un his own bizness, he hatter take en go in pardnerships wid Brer Fox, en dey want skacely a minnit in de day dat he want atter Brer Rabbit, en he kep' on en kep' on twel fus' news you knowed he got kotch up wid — en he got kotch up wid monstus bad."

"Goodness, Uncle Remus! I thought the Wolf let the Rabbit alone, after he tried to fool him about the Fox being dead."

"Better lemme tell dish yer my way. Bimeby hit'll be yo' bed-

time, en Miss Sally'll be a hollerin' atter you, en you'll be a whimplin' roun', an den Mars John'll fetch up de re'r wid dat ar strop w'at I made fer 'im."

The child laughed, and playfully shook his fist in the simple, serious face of the venerable old man, but said no more. Uncle Remus waited awhile to be sure there was to be no other demonstration, and then proceeded:

"Brer Rabbit ain't see no peace w'atsumever. He can't leave home 'cep' Brer Wolf 'ud make a raid en tote off some er de fambly. Brer Rabbit b'ilt 'im a straw house, en hit wuz tored down; den he made a house ouden pine tops, en dat went de same way; den he made 'im a bark house, en dat wuz raided on, en eve'y time he los' a house he los' one er his chilluns. Las' Brer Rabbit got mad, he did, en cust, en den he went off, he did, en got some kyarprinters, en dey b'ilt 'im a plank house wid rock foundashuns. Atter dat he could have some peace en quietness. He could go out en pass de time er day wid his neighbors, en come back en set by de fier, en smoke his pipe, en read de newspapers same like enny man w'at got a fambly. He made a hole, he did, in de cellar whar de little Rabbits could hide out w'en dar wuz much uv a racket in de neighborhood, en de latch er de front do' kotch on de inside. Brer Wolf, he see how de lan' lay, he did, en he lay low. De little Rabbits was mighty skittish, but hit got so dat cole chills ain't run up Brer Rabbit's back no mo' w'en he heerd Brer Wolf go gallopin' by.

"Bimeby, one day w'en Brer Rabbit wuz fixin' fer ter call on Miss Coon, he heerd a monstus fuss en clatter up de big road, en 'mos' 'fo' he could fix his years fer ter lissen, Brer Wolf run in de do'. De little Rabbits dey went inter dere hole in de cellar, dey did, like blowin' out a cannle. Brer Wolf wuz far'ly kivver'd wid mud, en mighty nigh outer win'.

"'Oh, do pray save me, Brer Rabbit!' sez Brer Wolf, sezee. 'Do please, Brer Rabbit! de dogs is atter me, en dey'll t'ar me up. Don't you year um comin'? Oh, do please save me, Brer Rabbit! Hide me some'rs whar de dogs won't git me.'

"No quicker sed dan done.

"'Jump in dat big chist dar, Brer Wolf,' sez Brer Rabbit, sezee; 'jump in dar en make yo'se'f at home.'

"In jump Brer Wolf, down come the led, en inter de hasp went de hook, en dar Mr. Wolf wuz. Den Brer Rabbit went ter de lookin' glass, he did, en wink at hisse'f, en den he draw'd de rockin' cheer in front er de fier, he did, en tuck a big chaw terbarker."

"Tobacco, Uncle Remus?" asked the little boy, incredulously.

"Rabbit terbarker, honey. You know dis yer life ev'lastin' w'at Miss Sally puts 'mong de cloze in de trunk; well, dat's rabbit terbarker. Den Brer Rabbit sot dar long time, he did, turnin' his mine over en wukken his thinkin' masheen. Bimeby he got up, en sorter stir 'roun'. Den Brer Wolf open up:

"'Is de dogs all gone, Brer Rabbit?'

"'Seem like I hear one un um smellin' roun' de chimbly cornder des now.'

"Den Brer Rabbit git de kittle en fill it full er water, en put it on de fier.

"'W'at you doin' now, Brer Rabbit?'

"'I'm fixin' fer ter make you a nice cup er tea, Brer Wolf.'

"Den Brer Rabbit went ter de cubberd en git de gimlet, en commence for ter bo' little holes in de chist led.

"'W'at you doin' now, Brer Rabbit?'

"'I'm a bo'in' little holes so you kin get bref, Brer Wolf.'

"Den Brer Rabbit went out en git some mo' wood, en fling it on de fier.

"'W'at you doin' now, Brer Rabbit?'

"'I'm a chunkin' up de fier so you won't git cole, Brer Wolf.'

"Den Brer Rabbit went down inter de cellar en fotch out all his chilluns.

"'W'at you doin' now, Brer Rabbit?'

"'I'm a tellin' my chilluns w'at a nice man you is, Brer Wolf.'

"En de chilluns, dey had ter put der han's on der moufs fer ter keep fum laffin'. Den Brer Rabbit he got de kittle en commenced fer to po' de hot water on de chist led.

"'W'at dat I hear, Brer Rabbit?'

"'You hear de win' a blowin', Brer Wolf.'

"Den de water begin fer ter sif' thoo.

"'W'at dat I feel, Brer Rabbit?'

"'You feels de fleas a bitin', Brer Wolf.'

"'Dey er bitin' mighty hard, Brer Rabbit.'

"'Tu'n over on de udder side, Brer Wolf.'

"'W'at dat I feel now, Brer Rabbit?'

"'Still you feels de fleas, Brer Wolf.'

"'Dey er eatin' me up, Brer Rabbit,' en dem wuz de las words er Brer Wolf, kase de scaldin' water done de bizness.

"Den Brer Rabbit call in his neighbors, he did, en dey hilt a reg'lar juberlee; en ef you go ter Brer Rabbit's house right now, I dunno but

w'at you'll s'ne Brer Wolf's hide hangin' in de back po'ch, en all be-kaze he wuz so bizzy wid udder fo'kses doin's."

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Characterize Uncle Remus. What qualities do you think would make him a desirable companion for a small boy?

2. Read the story aloud until you can make the dialect flow smoothly. To appreciate its rich flavor and color, compare it with the totally false Negro dialect in Poe's "The Gold Bug."

3. Have you ever seen the edition of *Uncle Remus: His Songs and Sayings* illustrated by Church? An edition in 1906 was illustrated by A. B. Frost. To what extent are illustrations in books important? With what other books do you associate the pictures of a particular illustrator?

### *For Ambitious Students*

4. You would enjoy reading *The Life and Letters of Joel Chandler Harris* by his daughter-in-law, Julia Collier Harris.

## O. HENRY (1867-1910)

O. Henry (William Sydney Porter) had a short but exceedingly varied life. Born in North Carolina, he migrated to a Texas cattle ranch in search of health; edited a paper; worked in a bank; became entangled in a charge of embezzlement, which caused him to flee to Central America; returned to this country and paid the penalty of his lack of business sense; and eventually landed in New York, where success but not fortune awaited him. Most of his stories are brief; and as many of them were written for a newspaper, it is small wonder that they smack of journalism.

His sense of plot was phenomenal. The surprise ending, the ability to throw the reader off the scent, the suggestive use of a clue which reveals the whole situation at a glance — these were tricks in his kit which he used over and over again, but always with a fresh and original touch. Besides, his warmth of human understanding and sympathy with the "under-dog" give poignancy to many of his stories, even while the reader is convulsed by his amusing speech idioms and absurd situations. The following story has the traditional earmarks of a typical O. Henry story — wit, humor, irony, pathos, cleverness, individuality, and local color.

## THE WHIRLIGIG OF LIFE

JUSTICE-OF-THE-PEACE Benaja Widdup sat in the door of his office smoking his elder-stem pipe. Halfway to the zenith the Cumberland range rose blue-gray in the afternoon haze. A speckled hen swaggered down the main street of the "settlement," cackling foolishly.

Up the road came a sound of creaking axles, and then a slow cloud of dust, and then a bull-cart bearing Ransie Bilbro and his wife. The cart stopped at the Justice's door, and the two climbed down. Ransie was a narrow six feet of sallow brown skin and yellow hair. The imperturbability of the mountains hung upon him like a suit of armor. The woman was calicoed, angled, snuff-brushed, and weary with unknown desires. Through it all gleamed a faint protest of cheated youth unconscious of its loss.

The Justice of the Peace slipped his feet into his shoes, for the sake of dignity, and moved to let them enter.

"We-all," said the woman, in a voice like the wind blowing through pine boughs, "want a divo'ce." She looked at Ransie to see if he noted any flaw or ambiguity or evasion or partiality or self-partisanship in her statement of their business.

"A divo'ce," repeated Ransie, with a solemn nod. "We-all can't git along together nohow. It's lonesome enough fur to live in the mount'ins when a man and a woman keers fur one another. But when she's a-spittin' like a wildcat or a-sullenin' like a hoot-owl in the cabin, a man ain't got no call to live with her."

"When he's a no-'count varmint," said the woman, without any especial warmth, "a-traipsin' along of scalawags and moonshiners and a-layin' on his back pizen 'ith co'n whiskey, and a-pesterin' folks with a pack o' hungry, triflin' houn's to feed! "

"When she keeps a-throwin' skillet lids," came Ransie's antiphony,<sup>1</sup> "and slings b'ilin' water on the best coon-dog in the Cum-berlands, and sets herself agin' cookin' a man's victuals, and keeps him awake o' nights accusin' him of a sight of doin's! "

"When he's al'ays a-fightin' the revenues, and gits a hard name in the mount'ins fur a mean man, who's gwine to be able fur to sleep o' nights? "

The Justice of the Peace stirred deliberately to his duties. He placed his one chair and a wooden stool for his petitioners. He

<sup>1</sup> antiphony: response, as in chants.

opened his book of statutes on the table and scanned the index. Presently he wiped his spectacles and shifted his inkstand.

"The law and the statutes," said he, "air silent on the subjeck of divo'ce as fur as the jurisdiction of this co't air concerned. But, accordin' to equity and the Constitution and the golden rule, it's a bad barg'in that can't run both ways. If a justice of the peace can marry a couple, it's plain that he is bound to be able to divo'ce 'em. This here office will issue a decree of divo'ce and abide by the decision of the Supreme Co't to hold it good."

Ransie Bilbro drew a small tobacco-bag from his trousers pocket. Out of this he shook upon the table a five-dollar note. "Sold a b'ar-skin and two foxes fur that," he remarked. "It's all the money we got."

"The regular price of a divo'ce in this co't," said the Justice, "air five dollars." He stuffed the bill into the pocket of his homespun vest with a deceptive air of indifference. With much bodily toil and mental travail he wrote the decree upon half a sheet of foolscap, and then copied it upon the other. Ransie Bilbro and his wife listened to his reading of the document that was to give them freedom:

"Know all men by these presents that Ransie Bilbro and his wife, Ariela Bilbro, this day personally appeared before me and promises that hereinafter they will neither love, honor, nor obey each other, neither for better nor worse, being of sound mind and body, and accept summons for divorce according to the peace and dignity of the State. Herein fail not, so help you God. Benaja Widdup, justice of the peace in and for the county of Piedmont, State of Tennessee."

The Justice was about to hand one of the documents to Ransie. The voice of Ariela delayed the transfer. Both men looked at her. Their dull masculinity was confronted by something sudden and unexpected in the woman.

"Judge, don't you give him that air paper yit. 'Tain't all settled, nohow. I got to have my rights first. I got to have my ali-money. 'Tain't no kind of a way to do fur a man to divo'ce his wife 'thout her havin' a cent fur to do with. I'm a-layin' off to be a-goin' up to brother Ed's up on Hogback Mount'in. I'm bound fur to hev a pa'r of shoes and some snuff and things besides. Ef Rance kin affo'd a divo'ce, let him pay me ali-money."

Ransie Bilbro was stricken to dumb perplexity. There had been no previous hint of alimony. Women were always bringing up startling and unlooked-for issues.

Justice Benaja Widdup felt that the point demanded judicial deci-



sion. The authorities were also silent on the subject of alimony. But the woman's feet were bare. The trail to Hogback Mountain was steep and flinty.

"Ariela Bilbro," he asked, in official tones, "how much did you 'low would be good and sufficient ali-money in the case befo' the co't."

"I 'lowed," she answered, "fur the shoes and all, to say five dollars. That ain't much fur ali-money, but I reckon that'll git me up to brother Ed's."

"The amount," said the Justice, "air not onreasonable. Ransie Bilbro, you air ordered by the co't to pay the plaintiff the sum of five dollars befo' the decree of divo'ce air issued."

"I hain't no mo' money," breathed Ransie, heavily. "I done paid you all I had."

"Otherwise," said the Justice, looking severely over his spectacles, "you air in contempt of co't."

"I reckon if you gimme till tomorrow," pleaded the husband, "I mout be able to rake or scrape it up sowewhars. I never looked for to be a-payin' no ali-money."

"The case air adjourned," said Benaja Widdup, "till tomorrow, when you-all will present yo'selves and obey the order of the co't. Followin' of which the decrees of divo'ce will be delivered." He sat down in the door and began to loosen a shoestring.

"We mout as well go down to Uncle Ziah's," decided Ransie, "and spend the night." He climbed into the cart on one side, and Ariela climbed in on the other. Obeying the flap of his rope, the little red bull slowly came around on a tack, and the cart crawled away in the nimbus<sup>1</sup> arising from its wheels.

Justice-of-the-peace Benaja Widdup smoked his elder-stem pipe. Late in the afternoon he got his weekly paper, and read it until the twilight dimmed its lines. Then he lit the tallow candle on his table, and read until the moon rose, marking the time for supper. He lived in the double log cabin on the slope near the girdled poplar. Going home to supper he crossed a little branch darkened by a laurel thicket. The dark figure of a man stepped from the laurels and pointed a rifle at his breast. His hat was pulled down low, and something covered most of his face.

"I want yo' money," said the figure, "'thout any talk. I'm gettin' nervous, and my finger's a-wabblin' on this here trigger."

"I've only got f-f-five dollars," said the Justice, producing it from his vest pocket.

<sup>1</sup> nimbus: cloud of vapor surrounding a god or goddess; here humorous for dust

"Roll it up," came the order, "and stick it in the end of this here gun-bar'l."

The bill was crisp and new. Even fingers that were clumsy and trembling found little difficulty in making a spill of it and inserting it (this with less ease) into the muzzle of the rifle.

"Now I reckon you kin be goin' along," said the robber.

The Justice lingered not on his way.

The next day came the little red bull, drawing the cart to the office door. Justice Benaja Widdup had his shoes on, for he was expecting the visit. In his presence Ransie Bilbro handed to his wife a five-dollar bill. The official's eye sharply viewed it. It seemed to curl up as though it had been rolled and inserted into the end of a gun-barrel. But the Justice refrained from comment. It is true that other bills might be inclined to curl. He handed each one a decree of divorce. Each stood awkwardly silent, slowly folding the guarantee of freedom. The woman cast a shy glance full of constraint at Ransie.

"I reckon you'll be goin' back up to the cabin," she said, "along 'ith the bull-cart. There's bread in the tin box settin' on the shelf. I put the bacon in the b'ilin'-pot to keep the hounds from gittin' it. Don't forget to wind the clock tonight."

"You air a-goin' to your brother Ed's?" asked Ransie, with fine unconcern.

"I was 'lowin' to get along up thar afore night. I ain't sayin' as they'll pester theyselves any to make me welcome, but I hain't no-whar else fur to go. It's a right smart ways, and I reckon I better be goin'. I'll be a-sayin' good-by, Ranse — that is, if you keer fur to say so."

"I don't know as anybody's a hound dog," said Ransie, in a martyr's voice, "fur to not want to say good-by — 'less you air so anxious to git away that you don't want me to say it."

Ariela was silent. She folded the five-dollar bill and her decree carefully, and placed them in the bosom of her dress. Benaja Widdup watched the money disappear with mournful eyes behind his spectacles.

And then with his next words he achieved rank (as his thoughts ran) with either the great crowd of the world's sympathizers or the little crowd of its great financiers.

"Be kind o' lonesome in the old cabin tonight, Ranse," he said.

Ransie Bilbro stared out at the Cumberlands, clear blue now in the sunlight. He did not look at Ariela.

"I 'low it might be lonesome," he said; "but when folks gits mad and wants a divo'ce, you can't make folks stay."

"There's others wanted a divo'ce," said Ariela, speaking to the wooden stool. "Besides, nobody don't want nobody to stay."

"Nobody never said they didn't."

"Nobody never said they did. I reckon I better start on now to brother Ed's."

"Nobody can't wind that old clock."

"Want me to go back along 'ith you in the cart and wind it fur you, Ranse?"

The mountaineer's countenance was proof against emotion. But he reached out a big hand and enclosed Ariela's thin brown one. Her soul peeped out once through her impassive face, hallowing it.

"Them hounds shan't pester you no more," said Ransie. "I reckon I been mean and low down. You wind that clock, Ariela."

"My heart hit's in that cabin, Ranse," she whispered, "along 'ith you. I ain't a-goin' to git mad no more. Le's be startin', Ranse, so's we kin git home by sundown."

Justice-of-the-peace Benaja Widdup interposed as they started for the door, forgetting his presence.

"In the name of the State of Tennessee," he said, "I forbid you-all to be a-defyin' of its laws and statutes. This co't is mo' than willin' and full of joy to see the clouds of discord and misunderstandin' rollin' away from two lovin' hearts, but it air the duty of the co't to p'serve the morals and integrity of the State. The co't reminds you that you air no longer man and wife, but air divo'ced by regular decree, and as such air not entitled to the benefits and 'purtenances of the matter-monial estate."

Ariela caught Ransie's arm. Did those words mean that she must lose him now when they had just learned the lesson of life?

"But the co't air prepared," went on the Justice, "fur to remove the disabilities set up by the decree of divo'ce. The co't air on hand to perform the solemn ceremony of marri'ge, thus fixin' things up and enablin' the parties in the case to resume the honor'ble and elevatin' state of mattermony which they desires. The fee fur performin' said ceremony will be, in this case, to wit, five dollars."

Ariela caught the gleam of promise in his words. Swiftly her hand went to her bosom. Freely as an alighting dove the bill fluttered to the Justice's table. Her sallow cheek colored as she stood hand in hand with Ransie and listened to the reuniting words.

Ransie helped her into the cart, and climbed in beside her. The lit-

tle red bull turned once more, and they set out, hand-clasped, for the mountains.

Justice-of-the-peace Benaja Widdup sat in his door and took off his shoes. Once again he fingered the bill tucked down in his vest pocket. Once again he smoked his elder-stem pipe. Once again the speckled hen swaggered down the main street of the "settlement," cackling foolishly.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In a few short sentences state the plot of the story. How does the five-dollar bill figure in the plot?
2. Can you justify the title? Why didn't the author call it "The Rhythm of Life" or "The Divorce"?
3. Why is the last paragraph the same as the first? Does this repetition strengthen the significance of the title?
4. Of the various O. Henry "earmarks" mentioned in the introduction, which stand out particularly in this story?

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

5. These mountain folk impress O. Henry chiefly by their unemotional manner. He comments on the Justice's *imperturbability* (page 118), his air of being impossible to disturb. Ariela is *impassive* (page 122), without any show of feeling. Only once does she even show *constraint* (page 121), an effort to repress her emotions.

#### JACK LONDON (1876-1916)

"Jack London, California waif, water-front street gamin, barroom 'tough,' and hoodlum, leader of the oyster pirates, deck hand on a North Pacific sealer, millworker, hobo, college student for a time, gold seeker in Alaska during the first wild days of the Klondike rush, adventurer among the islands of the South Seas!" Surely here is a wealth of experience for a writer to draw upon for stories! London's stories are filled with an atmosphere which convinces his reader that authentic pictures of life are being painted. Written early in the present century, they embody both the localized realism and the journalistic style which first appeared between the years 1890 and 1900. Their virility and power make them epic in scope. They are "crisp and crackling and interesting, terse in style and vigorous of phrase," as he himself declared that stories should be.

## TO BUILD A FIRE

In this story notice how London piles detail upon detail to accomplish his effect. There are no digressions, and no time is wasted in getting from introduction to conclusion. "Cold" is the fourth word, and the story ends with the phrase "fire providers." In technique this is an almost perfect story. Give it a fair chance at your emotions by reading it through without an interruption.

DAY HAD broken cold and gray, exceedingly cold and gray, when the man turned aside from the main Yukon trail and climbed the high earth bank, where a dim and little-traveled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland. It was a steep bank, and he paused for breath at the top, excusing the act to himself by looking at his watch. It was nine o'clock. There was no sun nor hint of sun, though there was not a cloud in the sky. It was a clear day, and yet there seemed an intangible pall over the face of things, a subtle gloom that made the day dark, and that was due to the absence of sun. This fact did not worry the man. He was used to the lack of sun. It had been days since he had seen the sun, and he knew that a few more days must pass before that cheerful orb, due south, would just peep above the sky line and dip immediately from view.

The man flung a look back along the way he had come. The Yukon lay a mile wide and hidden under three feet of ice. On top of this ice were as many feet of snow. It was all pure white, rolling in gentle undulations where the ice jams of the freeze-up had formed. North and south, as far as his eye could see, it was unbroken white, save for a dark hairline that curved and twisted from around the spruce-covered island to the south, and that curved and twisted away into the north, where it disappeared behind another spruce-covered island. This dark hairline was the trail — the main trail — that led south five hundred miles to the Chilkoot Pass, Dyea, and salt water; and that led north seventy miles to Dawson, and still on to the north a thousand miles to Nulato, and finally to St. Michael on Bering Sea, a thousand miles and half a thousand more.

But all this — the mysterious, far-reaching hairline trail, the absence of sun from the sky, the tremendous cold, and the strangeness and weirdness of it all — made no impression on the man. It was not because he was long used to it. He was a newcomer in the land, a cheechako, and this was his first winter. The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the

things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty-odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold, and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe. Fifty degrees below zero stood for a bite of frost that hurt and that must be guarded against by the use of mittens, ear flaps, warm moccasins, and thick socks. Fifty degrees below zero was to him just precisely fifty degrees below zero. That there should be anything more to it than that was a thought that never entered his head.

As he turned to go on, he spat speculatively. There was a sharp, explosive crackle that startled him. He spat again. And again, in the air, before it could fall to the snow, the spittle crackled. He knew that at fifty below spittle crackled on the snow, but this spittle had crackled in the air. Undoubtedly it was colder than fifty below — how much colder he did not know. But the temperature did not matter. He was bound for the old claim on the left fork of Henderson Creek, where the boys were already. They had come over across the divide from the Indian Creek country, while he had come the roundabout way to take a look at the possibilities of getting out logs in the spring from the islands in the Yukon. He would be in to camp by six o'clock; a bit after dark, it was true, but the boys would be there, a fire would be going, and a hot supper would be ready. As for lunch, he pressed his hand against the protruding bundle under his jacket. It was also under his shirt, wrapped up in a handkerchief and lying against the naked skin. It was the only way to keep the biscuits from freezing. He smiled agreeably to himself as he thought of those biscuits, each cut open and sopped in bacon grease, and each inclosing a generous slice of fried bacon.

He plunged in among the big spruce trees. The trail was faint. A foot of snow had fallen since the last sled had passed over, and he was glad he was without a sled, traveling light. In fact, he carried nothing but the lunch wrapped in the handkerchief. He was surprised, however, at the cold. It certainly was cold, he concluded, as he rubbed his numb nose and cheekbones with his mittened hand. He was a warm-whiskered man, but the hair on his face did not protect the high cheekbones and the eager nose that thrust itself aggressively into the frosty air.

At the man's heels trotted a dog, a big native husky, the proper

wolf dog, gray-coated and without any visible or temperamental difference from its brother, the wild wolf. The animal was depressed by the tremendous cold. It knew that it was no time for traveling. Its instinct told it a truer tale than was told to the man by the man's judgment. In reality, it was not merely colder than fifty below zero; it was colder than sixty below, than seventy below. It was seventy-five below zero. Since the freezing point is thirty-two above zero, it meant that one hundred and seven degrees of frost obtained. The dog did not know anything about thermometers. Possibly in its brain there was no sharp consciousness of a condition of very cold such as was in the man's brain. But the brute had its instinct. It experienced a vague but menacing apprehension that subdued it and made it slink along at the man's heels, and that made it question eagerly every unwonted movement of the man, as if expecting him to go into camp or to seek shelter somewhere and build a fire. The dog had learned fire, and it wanted fire, or else to burrow under the snow and cuddle its warmth away from the air.

The frozen moisture of its breathing had settled on its fur in a fine powder of frost, and especially were its jowls, muzzle, and eyelashes whitened by its crystaled breath. The man's red beard and mustache were likewise frosted, but more solidly, the deposit taking the form of ice and increasing with every warm, moist breath he exhaled. Also, the man was chewing tobacco, and the muzzle of ice held his lips so rigidly that he was unable to clear his chin when he expelled the juice. The result was that a crystal beard of the color and solidity of amber was increasing its length on his chin. If he fell down it would shatter itself, like glass, into brittle fragments. But he did not mind the appendage. It was the penalty all tobacco chewers paid in that country, and he had been out before in two cold snaps. They had not been so cold as this, he knew, but by the spirit thermometer at Sixty Mile he knew they had been registered at fifty below and at fifty-five.

He held on through the level stretch of woods for several miles, crossed a wide flat of niggerheads, and dropped down a bank to the frozen bed of a small stream. This was Henderson Creek, and he knew he was ten miles from the forks. He looked at his watch. It was ten o'clock. He was making four miles an hour, and he calculated that he would arrive at the forks at half-past twelve. He decided to celebrate that event by eating his lunch there.

The dog dropped in again at his heels, with a tail drooping discouragement, as the man swung along the creek bed. The furrow of the old sled trail was plainly visible, but a dozen inches of snow cov-

ered the marks of the last runners. In a month no man had come up or down that silent creek. The man held steadily on. He was not much given to thinking, and just then particularly he had nothing to think about save that he would eat lunch at the forks and that at six o'clock he would be in camp with the boys. There was nobody to talk to; and, had there been, speech would have been impossible because of the ice muzzle on his mouth. So he continued monotonously to chew tobacco and to increase the length of his amber beard.

Once in a while the thought reiterated itself that it was very cold and that he had never experienced such cold. As he walked along he rubbed his cheekbones and nose with the back of his mittened hand. He did this automatically, now and again changing hands. But rub as he would, the instant he stopped his cheekbones went numb, and the following instant the end of his nose went numb. He was sure to frost his cheeks; he knew that, and experienced a pang of regret that he had not devised a nose strap of the sort Bud wore in cold snaps. Such a strap passed across the cheeks, as well, and saved them. But it didn't matter much, after all. What were frosted cheeks? A bit painful, that was all; they were never serious.

Empty as the man's mind was of thought, he was keenly observant, and he noticed the changes in the creek, the curves and bends and timber jams, and always he sharply noted where he placed his feet. Once, coming around a bend, he shied abruptly, like a startled horse, curved away from the place where he had been walking, and retreated several paces back along the trail. The creek, he knew, was frozen clear to the bottom — no creek could contain water in that arctic winter — but he knew also that there were springs that bubbled out from the hillsides and ran along under the snow and on top of the ice of the creek. He knew that the coldest snaps never froze these springs, and he knew likewise their danger. They were traps. They hid pools of water under the snow that might be three inches deep, or three feet. Sometimes a skin of ice half an inch thick covered them, and in turn was covered by the snow. Sometimes there were alternate layers of water and ice skin, so that when one broke through he kept on breaking through for a while, sometimes wetting himself to the waist.

That was why he had shied in such panic. He had felt the give under his feet and heard the crackle of a snow-hidden ice skin. And to get his feet wet in such a temperature meant trouble and danger. At the very least it meant delay, for he would be forced to stop and



build a fire, and under its protection to bare his feet while he dried his socks and moccasins. He stood and studied the creek bed and its banks, and decided that the flow of water came from the right. He reflected a while, rubbing his nose and cheeks, then skirted to the left, stepping gingerly and testing the footing for each step. Once clear of the danger, he took a fresh chew of tobacco and swung along at his four-mile gait.

In the course of the next two hours he came upon several similar traps. Usually the snow above the hidden pools had a sunken, can-died appearance that advertised the danger. Once again, however, he had a close call; and once, suspecting danger, he compelled the dog to go on in front. The dog did not want to go. It hung back until the man shoved it forward, and then it went quickly across the white, unbroken surface. Suddenly it broke through, floundered to one side, and got away to firmer footing. It had wet its forefeet and legs, and almost immediately the water that clung to it turned to ice. It made quick efforts to lick the ice off its legs, then dropped down in the snow and began to bite out the ice that had formed between the toes. This was a matter of instinct. To permit the ice to remain would mean sore feet. It did not know this. It merely obeyed the mysterious prompting that arose from the deep crypts of its being. But the man knew, having achieved a judgment on the subject, and he removed the mitten from his right hand and helped tear out the ice particles. He did not expose his fingers more than a minute, and was astonished at the swift numbness that smote them. It certainly was cold. He pulled on the mitten hastily, and beat the hand savagely across his chest.

At twelve o'clock the day was at its brightest. Yet the sun was too far south on its winter journey to clear the horizon. The bulge of the earth intervened between it and Henderson Creek, where the man walked under a clear sky at noon and cast no shadow. At half-past twelve, to the minute, he arrived at the forks of the creek. He was pleased at the speed he had made. If he kept it up, he would certainly be with the boys by six. He unbuttoned his jacket and shirt and drew forth his lunch. The action consumed no more than a quarter of a minute, yet in that brief moment the numbness laid hold of the exposed fingers. He did not put the mitten on, but, instead, struck the fingers a dozen sharp smashes against his leg. Then he sat down on a snow-covered log to eat. The sting that followed upon the striking of his fingers against his leg ceased so quickly that he was startled. He had had no chance to take a bite of biscuit. He

struck the fingers repeatedly and returned them to the mitten, baring the other hand for the purpose of eating. He tried to take a mouthful, but the ice muzzle prevented. He had forgotten to build a fire and thaw out. He chuckled at his foolishness, and as he chuckled he noted the numbness creeping into the exposed fingers. Also he noted that the stinging which had first come to his toes when he sat down was already passing away. He wondered whether the toes were warm or numb. He moved them inside the moccasins and decided that they were numb.

He pulled the mitten on hurriedly and stood up. He was a bit frightened. He stamped up and down until the stinging returned into the feet. It certainly was cold, was his thought. That man from Sulphur Creek had spoken the truth when telling how cold it sometimes got in the country. And he had laughed at him at the time! That showed one must not be too sure of things. There was no mistake about it, it *was* cold. He strode up and down, stamping his feet and threshing his arms, until reassured by the returning warmth. Then he got out matches and proceeded to make a fire. From the undergrowth, where high water of the previous spring had lodged a supply of seasoned twigs, he got his firewood. Working carefully from a small beginning, he soon had a roaring fire, over which he thawed the ice from his face and in the protection of which he ate his biscuits. For the moment the cold of space was outwitted. The dog took satisfaction in the fire, stretching out close enough for warmth and far enough away to escape being singed.

When the man had finished, he filled his pipe and took his comfortable time over a smoke. Then he pulled on his mittens, settled the ear flaps of his cap firmly about his ears, and took the creek trail up the left fork. The dog was disappointed and yearned back toward the fire. This man did not know cold. Possibly all the generations of his ancestry had been ignorant of cold, of real cold, of cold one hundred and seven degrees below freezing point. But the dog knew; all its ancestry knew, and it had inherited the knowledge. And it knew that it was not good to walk abroad in such fearful cold. It was the time to lie snug in a hole in the snow and wait for a curtain of cloud to be drawn across the face of outer space whence this cold came. On the other hand, there was no keen intimacy between the dog and the man. The one was the toil-slave of the other, and the only caresses it had ever received were the caresses of the whiplash and of harsh and menacing throat sounds that threatened the whiplash. So the dog made no effort to communicate its apprehension to

the man. It was not concerned in the welfare of the man; it was for its own sake that it yearned back toward the fire. But the man whistled, and spoke to it with the sound of whiplashes, and the dog swung in at the man's heels and followed after.

The man took a chew of tobacco and proceeded to start a new amber beard. Also, his moist breath quickly powdered with white his mustache, eyebrows, and lashes. There did not seem to be so many springs on the left fork of the Henderson, and for half an hour the man saw no signs of any. And then it happened. At a place where there were no signs, where the soft, unbroken snow seemed to advertise solidity beneath, the man broke through. It was not deep. He wet himself halfway to the knees before he floundered out to the firm crust.

He was angry, and cursed his luck aloud. He had hoped to get into camp with the boys at six o'clock, and this would delay him an hour, for he would have to build a fire and dry out his footgear. This was imperative at that low temperature — he knew that much; and he turned aside to the bank, which he climbed. On top, tangled in the underbrush about the trunks of several small spruce trees, was a high-water deposit of dry firewood — sticks and twigs, principally, but also larger portions of seasoned branches and fine, dry, last year's grasses. He threw down several large pieces on top of the snow. This served for a foundation and prevented the young flame from drowning itself in the snow it otherwise would melt. The flame he got by touching a match to a small shred of birch bark that he took from his pocket. This burned even more readily than paper. Placing it on the foundation, he fed the young flame with wisps of dry grass and with the tiniest dry twigs.

He worked slowly and carefully, keenly aware of his danger. Gradually, as the flame grew stronger, he increased the size of the twigs with which he fed it. He squatted in the snow, pulling the twigs out from their entanglement in the brush and feeding directly to the flame. He knew there must be no failure. When it is seventy-five below zero a man must not fail in his first attempt to build a fire — that is, if his feet are wet. If his feet are dry, and he fails, he can run along the trail for half a mile and restore his circulation. But the circulation of wet and freezing feet cannot be restored by running when it is seventy-five below. No matter how fast he runs, the wet feet will freeze the harder.

All this the man knew. The old-timer on Sulphur Creek had told him about it the previous fall, and now he was appreciating the

advice. Already all sensation had gone out of his feet. To build the fire, he had been forced to remove his mittens, and the fingers had quickly gone numb. His pace of four miles an hour had kept his heart pumping blood to the surface of his body and to all the extremities. But the instant he stopped, the action of the pump eased down. The cold of space smote the unprotected tip of the planet, and he, being on that unprotected tip, received the full force of the blow. The blood of his body recoiled before it. The blood was alive, like the dog, and like the dog it wanted to hide away and cover itself up from the fearful cold. So long as he walked four miles an hour, he pumped that blood, willy-nilly, to the surface; but now it ebbed away and sank down into the recesses of his body. The extremities were the first to feel its absence. His wet feet froze the faster, and his exposed fingers numbed the faster, though they had not yet begun to freeze. Nose and cheeks were already freezing, while the skin of all his body chilled as it lost its blood.

But he was safe. Toes and nose and cheeks would be only touched by the frost, for the fire was beginning to burn with strength. He was feeding it with twigs the size of his finger. In another minute he would be able to feed it with branches the size of his wrist, and then he could remove his wet footgear, and, while it dried, he could keep his naked feet warm by the fire, rubbing them at first, of course, with snow. The fire was a success. He was safe. He remembered the advice of the old-timer on Sulphur Creek, and smiled. The old-timer had been very serious in laying down the law that no man must travel alone in the Klondike after fifty below. Well, here he was; he had had the accident; he was alone; and he had saved himself. Those old-timers were rather womanish, some of them, he thought. All a man had to do was to keep his head, and he was all right. Any man who was a man could travel alone. But it was surprising the rapidity with which his cheeks and nose were freezing. And he had not thought his fingers could go lifeless in so short a time. Lifeless they were, for he could scarcely make them move together to grip a twig, and they seemed remote from his body and from him. When he touched a twig he had to look and see whether or not he had hold of it. The wires were pretty well down between him and his finger ends.

All of which counted for little. There was the fire, snapping and crackling and promising life with every dancing flame. He started to untie his moccasins. They were coated with ice; the thick German socks were like sheaths of iron halfway to the knees; and the moccasin strings were like rods of steel all twisted and knotted as by some con-

flagration. For a moment he tugged with his numb fingers, then, realizing the folly of it, he drew his sheath knife.

But before he could cut the strings, it happened. It was his own fault, or, rather, his mistake. He should not have built the fire under the spruce tree. He should have built it in the open. But it had been easier to pull the twigs from the brush and drop them directly on the fire. Now the tree under which he had done this carried a weight of snow on its boughs. No wind had blown for weeks, and each bough was fully freighted. Each time he had pulled a twig he had communicated a slight agitation to the tree — an imperceptible agitation, so far as he was concerned, but an agitation sufficient to bring about the disaster. High up in the tree one bough capsized its load of snow. This fell on the boughs beneath, capsizing them. This process continued, spreading out and involving the whole tree. It grew like an avalanche, and it descended without warning upon the man and the fire, and the fire was blotted out! Where it had burned was a mantle of fresh and disordered snow.

The man was shocked. It was as though he had just heard his own sentence of death. For a moment he sat and stared at the spot where the fire had been. Then he grew very calm. Perhaps the old-timer on Sulphur Creek was right. If he had only had a trailmate he would have been in no danger now. The trailmate could have built the fire. Well, it was up to him to build the fire over again, and this second time there must be no failure. Even if he succeeded, he would most likely lose some toes. His feet must be badly frozen by now, and there would be some time before the second fire was ready.

Such were his thoughts, but he did not sit and think them. He was busy all the time they were passing through his mind. He made a new foundation for a fire, this time in the open, where no treacherous tree could blot it out. Next he gathered dry grasses and tiny twigs from the high-water flotsam. He could not bring his fingers together to pull them out, but he was able to gather them by the handful. In this way he got many rotten twigs and bits of green moss that were undesirable, but it was the best he could do. He worked methodically, even collecting an armful of the larger branches to be used later when the fire gathered strength. And all the while the dog sat and watched him, a certain yearning wistfulness in its eyes, for it looked upon him as the fire provider, and the fire was slow in coming.

When all was ready, the man reached in his pocket for a second piece of birch bark. He knew the bark was there, and, though he

could not feel it with his fingers, he could hear its crisp rustling as he fumbled for it. Try as he would, he could not clutch hold of it. And all the time, in his consciousness, was the knowledge that each instant his feet were freezing. This thought tended to put him in a panic, but he fought against it and kept calm. He pulled on his mittens with his teeth, and threshed his arms back and forth, beating his hands with all his might against his sides. He did this sitting down, and he stood up to do it; and all the while the dog sat in the snow, its wolf brush of a tail curled around warmly over its forefeet, its sharp wolf ears pricked forward intently as it watched the man. And the man, as he beat and threshed with his arms and hands, felt a great surge of envy as he regarded the creature that was warm and secure in its natural covering.

After a time he was aware of the first faraway signals of sensation in his beaten fingers. The faint tingling grew stronger till it evolved into a stinging ache that was excruciating, but which the man hailed with satisfaction. He stripped the mitten from his right hand and fetched forth the birch bark. The exposed fingers were quickly going numb again. Next he brought out his bunch of sulphur matches. But the tremendous cold had already driven the life out of his fingers. In his effort to separate one match from the others, the whole bunch fell in the snow. He tried to pick it out of the snow, but failed. The dead fingers could neither touch nor clutch. He was very careful. He drove the thought of his freezing feet, and nose, and cheeks, out of his mind, devoting his whole soul to the matches. He watched, using the sense of vision in place of that of touch, and when he saw his fingers on each side the bunch, he closed them — that is, he willed to close them, for the wires were down, and the fingers did not obey. He pulled the mitten on the right hand, and beat it fiercely against his knee. Then, with both mittened hands, he scooped the bunch of matches, along with much snow, into his lap. Yet he was no better off.

After some manipulation he managed to get the bunch between the heels of his mittened hands. In this fashion he carried it to his mouth. The ice crackled and snapped when by a violent effort he opened his mouth. He drew the lower jaw in, curled the upper lip out of the way, and scraped the bunch with his upper teeth in order to separate a match. He succeeded in getting one, which he dropped on his lap. He was no better off. He could not pick it up. Then he devised a way. He picked it up in his teeth and scratched it on his leg. Twenty times he scratched before he succeeded in lighting it. As it flamed he held it with his teeth to the birch bark. But the burning brim-

stone went up his nostrils and into his lungs, causing him to cough spasmodically. The match fell into the snow and went out.

The old-timer on Sulphur Creek was right, he thought in the moment of controlled despair that ensued: after fifty below, a man should travel with a partner. He beat his hands, but failed in exciting any sensation. Suddenly he bared both hands, removing the mittens with his teeth. He caught the whole bunch between the heels of his hands. His arm muscles, not being frozen, enabled him to press the hand heels tightly against the matches. Then he scratched the bunch along his leg. It flared into flame, seventy sulphur matches at once! There was no wind to blow them out. He kept his head to one side to escape the strangling fumes, and held the blazing bunch to the birch bark. As he so held it, he became aware of sensation in his hand. His flesh was burning. He could smell it. Deep down below the surface he could feel it. The sensation developed into pain that grew acute. And still he endured it, holding the flame of the matches clumsily to the bark that would not light readily because his own burning hands were in the way, absorbing most of the flame.

At last, when he could endure no more, he jerked his hands apart. The blazing matches fell sizzling into the snow, but the birch bark was alight. He began laying dry grasses and the tiniest twigs on the flame. He could not pick and choose, for he had to lift the fuel between the heels of his hands. Small pieces of rotten wood and green moss clung to the twigs, and he bit them off as well as he could with his teeth. He cherished the flame carefully and awkwardly. It meant life, and it must not perish. The withdrawal of blood from the surface of his body now made him begin to shiver, and he grew more awkward. A large piece of green moss fell squarely on the little fire. He tried to poke it out with his fingers, but his shivering frame made him poke too far, and he disrupted the nucleus of the little fire, the burning grasses and tiny twigs separating and scattering. He tried to poke them together again, but, in spite of the tenseness of the effort, his shivering got away with him, and the twigs were hopelessly scattered. Each twig gushed a puff of smoke and went out. The fire provider had failed. As he looked apathetically about him, his eyes chanced on the dog, sitting across the ruins of the fire from him, in the snow, making restless, hunching movements, slightly lifting one forefoot and then the other, shifting its weight back and forth on them with wistful eagerness.

The sight of the dog put a wild idea into his head. He remembered the tale of the man, caught in a blizzard, who killed a steer and

crawled inside the carcass, and so was saved. He would kill the dog and bury his hands in the warm body until the numbness went out of them. Then he could build another fire. He spoke to the dog, calling it to him; but in his voice was a strange note of fear that frightened the animal, who had never known the man to speak in such way before. Something was the matter, and its suspicious nature sensed danger — it knew not what danger, but somewhere, somehow, in its brain arose an apprehension of the man. It flattened its ears down at the sound of the man's voice, and its restless, hunching movements and the liftings and shiftings of its forefeet became more pronounced; but it would not come to the man. He got on his hands and knees and crawled toward the dog. This unusual posture again excited suspicion, and the animal sidled mincingly away.

The man sat up in the snow for a moment and struggled for calmness. Then he pulled on his mittens, by means of his teeth, and got upon his feet. He glanced down at first in order to assure himself that he was really standing up, for the absence of sensation in his feet left him unrelated to the earth. His erect position in itself started to drive the webs of suspicion from the dog's mind; and when he spoke peremptorily with the sound of whiplashes in his voice, the dog rendered its customary allegiance and came to him. As it came within reaching distance, the man lost his control. His arms flashed out to the dog, and he experienced genuine surprise when he discovered that his hands could not clutch, that there was neither bend nor feeling in the fingers. He had forgotten for the moment that they were frozen and that they were freezing more and more. All this happened quickly, and before the animal could get away, he encircled its body with his arms. He sat down in the snow, and in this fashion held the dog, while it snarled and whined and struggled.

But it was all he could do, hold its body encircled in his arms and sit there. He realized that he could not kill the dog. There was no way to do it. With his helpless hands he could neither draw nor hold his sheath knife nor throttle the animal. He released it, and it plunged wildly away, with tail between its legs, and still snarling. It halted forty feet away and surveyed him curiously, with ears sharply pricked forward. The man looked down at his hands in order to locate them, and found them hanging on the ends of his arms. It struck him as curious that one should have to use his eyes in order to find out where his hands were. He began threshing his arms back and forth, beating the mittened hands against his sides. He did this for five minutes, violently, and his heart pumped enough blood up



to the surface to put a stop to his shivering. But no sensation was aroused in the hands. He had an impression that they hung like weights on the ends of his arms, but when he tried to run the impression down, he could not find it.

A certain fear of death, dull and oppressive, came to him. This fear quickly became poignant as he realized that it was no longer a mere matter of freezing his fingers and toes, or of losing his hands and feet, but that it was a matter of life and death, with the chances against him. This threw him into a panic, and he turned and ran up the creek bed along the old dim trail. The dog joined in behind and kept up with him. He ran blindly, without intention, in fear such as he had never known in his life. Slowly, as he plowed and floundered through the snow, he began to see things again — the banks of the creek, the old timber jams, the leafless aspens, and the sky. The running made him feel better. He did not shiver. Maybe, if he ran on, his feet would thaw out; and, anyway, if he ran far enough, he would reach the camp and the boys. Without doubt he would lose some fingers and toes and some of his face; but the boys would take care of him, and save the rest of him when he got there. And at the same time there was another thought in his mind that said he would never get to the camp and the boys; that it was too many miles away, that the freezing had too great a start on him, and that he would soon be stiff and dead. This thought he kept in the background and refused to consider. Sometimes it pushed itself forward and demanded to be heard, but he thrust it back and strove to think of other things.

It struck him as curious that he could run at all on feet so frozen that he could not feel them when they struck the earth and took the weight of his body. He seemed to himself to skim along above the surface, and to have no connection with the earth. Somewhere he had once seen a winged Mercury, and he wondered if Mercury felt as he felt when skimming over the earth.

His theory of running until he reached camp and the boys had one flaw in it: he lacked the endurance. Several times he stumbled, and finally he tottered, crumpled up, and fell. When he tried to rise, he failed. He must sit and rest, he decided, and next time he would merely walk and keep on going. As he sat and regained his breath, he noted that he was feeling quite warm and comfortable. He was not shivering, and it even seemed that a warm glow had come to his chest and trunk. And yet, when he touched his nose or cheeks, there was no sensation. Running would not thaw them out. Nor would it thaw out his hands and feet. Then the thought came to him that

the frozen portions of his body must be extending. He tried to keep this thought down, to forget it, to think of something else; he was aware of the panicky feeling that it caused, and he was afraid of the panic. But the thought asserted itself, and persisted, until it produced a vision of his body totally frozen. This was too much, and he made another wild run along the trail. Once he slowed down to a walk, but the thought of the freezing extending itself made him run again.

And all the time the dog ran with him, at his heels. When he fell down a second time, it curled its tail over its forefeet and sat in front of him, facing him, curiously eager and intent. The warmth and security of the animal angered him, and he cursed it till it flattened down its ears appeasingly. This time the shivering came more quickly upon the man. He was losing in his battle with the frost. It was creeping into his body from all sides. The thought of it drove him on, but he ran no more than a hundred feet, when he staggered and pitched headlong. It was his last panic. When he had recovered his breath and control, he sat up and entertained in his mind the conception of meeting death with dignity. However, the conception did not come to him in such terms. His idea of it was that he had been making a fool of himself, running around like a chicken with its head cut off—such was the simile that occurred to him. Well, he was bound to freeze anyway, and he might as well take it decently. With this new-found peace of mind came the first glimmerings of drowsiness. A good idea, he thought, to sleep off to death. It was like taking an anesthetic. Freezing was not so bad as people thought. There were lots worse ways to die.

He pictured the boys finding his body next day. Suddenly he found himself with them, coming along the trail and looking for himself. And, still with them, he came around a turn in the trail and found himself lying in the snow. He did not belong with himself any more, for even then he was out of himself standing with the boys and looking at himself in the snow. It certainly was cold, was his thought. When he got back to the States, he could tell the folks what real cold was. He drifted on from this to a vision of the old-timer on Sulphur Creek. He could see him quite clearly, warm and comfortable, and smoking a pipe.

"You were right, old hoss; you were right," the man mumbled to the old-timer of Sulphur Creek.

Then the man drowsed off into what seemed to him the most comfortable and satisfying sleep he had ever known. The dog sat facing

him and waiting. The brief day drew to a close in a long, slow twilight. There were no signs of a fire to be made, and, besides, never in the dog's experience had it known a man to sit like that in the snow and make no fire. As the twilight drew on, its eager yearning for the fire mastered it, and with a great lifting and shifting of forefeet, it whined softly, then flattened its ears down in anticipation of being chidden by the man. But the man remained silent. Later, the dog whined loudly. And still later it crept close to the man and caught the scent of death. This made the animal bristle and back away. A little longer it delayed, howling under the stars that leaped and danced and shone brightly in the cold sky. Then it turned and trotted up the trail in the direction of the camp it knew, where were the other food providers and fire providers.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In a plot story, interest may depend on suspense — your uncertainty as to which side is going to win in the struggle — or — when you are sure of the outcome — curiosity as to just how the victory will be achieved. Which kind of interest is there in "To Build a Fire"? By means of + and — signs in the margin, mark the places where the struggle seems to turn in the man's favor and against him. Does this make you uncertain as to the outcome?
2. What are the opposing forces of this plot? When were you sure that one had been triumphant in the struggle? How near the end of a good story should the reader know the outcome of the struggle?
3. How would the quality of the story have been affected had the man been rescued?
4. What is the difference between "localized romance" and "localized realism"? (See pages 50-52.) List some vivid details that add convincing atmosphere to this story.
5. Name other writers in the field of localized realism, and tell what part of the country each of them portrayed.
6. Why does the author use simple language in this story?
7. What effect is obtained by not naming the man? Owen Wister did not name the hero in *The Virginian*. Do you know any other stories using this device?

### For Your Vocabulary

8. Two sensations of this ill-fated arctic traveler are described with words that are particularly expressive, *excruciating* (page 133) and *poignant* (page 136). An intensely sharp physical pain is said to be *excruciating*,

or like being *crucified*. But *poignant*, which literally means piercing, is used of intense emotions more often than of physical feeling. Another difference is that although *poignant* is often used of painful feelings, like regret and fear, it can also be used of keenly pleasant feelings, such as *poignant* delight.

### *For Ambitious Students*

9. Write an account of the struggle of a person against a succession of difficulties. Try to balance success and failure so as to keep the reader in suspense as to the outcome.

10. To become better acquainted with Jack London's work, read "All-Gold Canyon," one of his best short stories, or others in *Tales of the Fish Patrol*, *Children of the Frost*, and *Lost Face*. If you have enjoyed *The Call of the Wild*, try other long stories: *The Sea-Wolf* and *White Fang*. *Martin Eden* is his autobiographical novel.

11. London was influenced by the writings of Rudyard Kipling, an Englishman. If you have read some of Kipling's stories, point out similarities between the two writers.

### SINCLAIR LEWIS (1885- )

To win the Nobel Prize in literature is to be recognized as a writer of world importance. The first American author to be honored by the Nobel Prize was Sinclair Lewis, who is probably the ablest exponent in America of the art of satire and a ceaseless crusader against those features of our social and political life which he considers vicious.

Sinclair Lewis has always been a nonconformist. As a boy in Sauk Center, Minnesota, he was an avid reader; and after school he went east to college instead of going to the state university like most of his schoolmates. At Yale he cared nothing for fraternities or the usual outside activities and none too much for the curriculum; while there he earned the enduring nickname "Red," because of his hair and his radical ideas.

Mr. Lewis has chosen to write about the contemporary American scene, not maintaining a strict realism, but coloring the narrative in order to bring home his social messages.

While Mr. Lewis's characters are typical and his settings recognizable, the ideas which he is trying to develop are much more important to him than a clear, objective portrayal of life. This is equally true of any propagandist or of any satirist; in his characters he must exaggerate those qualities, good and bad, on which he wants us to focus attention and form judgments. And since Mr. Lewis's social and political views are not the

conventional ones. his novels are always challenging: each new novel brings out angry protests, either from those who have been made the butt of his none-too-kindly satire or from those who disapprove of his doctrines.

### RING AROUND A ROSY

This story is a good-natured satire on those people who are never happy where they are. Each character has a reason for thinking his own country no longer tolerable. It is interesting to read in this story, which was written in 1931, that an Italian professor, annoyed by the loss of free speech and discussion in Italy, goes, of all places, to Germany — because there he can say anything he pleases!

T. ELIOT HOPKINS was a nice young man at forty-two, and he had done nicely all the nice things — Williams College, a New York brokerage office, his first million, his first Phyfe table, careful polo at Del Monte, the discovery that it was smart to enjoy the opera and the discovery that it was much smarter to ridicule it. In fact, by the time he had a penthouse on Park Avenue, Eliot understood the theory of relativity as applied to the world of fashion — that a man is distinguished not by what he likes but by what he is witty enough to loathe.

As for Eleanor, his wife, she came from Chicago, so naturally she had a cousin married to a French count and another cousin who would have married an Italian marquis if it had not been discovered that he was already married and not a marquis. Still, he really was Italian.

Their first year in the penthouse was ecstatic. Thirty stories up, atop 9999 Park Avenue, looking to east and north and south, it had a terrace exclamatory with scarlet wicker chairs, Pompeian marble benches, and a genuine rose garden attended by a real gardener — at three dollars an hour, from the florist's. On the terrace opened the duplex living room, fifty feet long, its Caen stone walls and twenty-foot windows soaring up to a raftered ceiling of English oak. But to a nosy and domestic mind, to one who had known Eleanor when she lived in a six-room bungalow in Wilmette, these glories of city-dominating terrace and castle hall were less impressive than the little perfections of the apartment: the kitchen, which was a little like a chemist's laboratory and more like the cabin of an electric locomotive; the bathrooms of plate glass and purple tile, and the master's bathroom with an open fireplace. Through this domain Eleanor bustled for a year, slipping out to look across the East River to the farthest hills and gashouses of Long Island, dashing inside to turn on the auto-

matic pipe organ, plumping down at her most *art moderne* desk of silver, aluminum, and black glass to write dinner invitations. And they entertained. Vastly. These gigantic rooms demanded people, and sometimes there were forty guests at the unique diamond-shaped dinner table, with five old family retainers sneaked in from the caterer's. With such a turnover of guests, there weren't always enough bank vice-presidents and English authors and baronets and other really worth-while people on the market, and Eleanor had to fall back on persons who were nothing but old friends, which was pretty hard on a girl. So she was not altogether contented, even before things happened.

They were important things. Eliot sold short before the stock-market depression. His first million was joined by two others, and he immediately took up reading, art criticism and refined manners. He also bought new jodhpurs. I am not quite sure what jodhpurs are, but then T. Eliot hadn't known, either, six years before. They have to do with polo, though whether they are something you ride or wear or hit the ball with, I have not been informed. But I do know that Eliot's jodhpurs were singularly well spoken of at Meadowbrook, and whatever else they may have been, they were not cursed by being American. They were as soundly English as cold toast.

Now, selling short at a time when everyone else is dismally long is likely to have a large effect on nice people, and Eleanor agreed with Eliot that it was shocking — it was worse than shocking, it was a bore — that they should have to go on slaving their lives away among commercial lowbrows, when in England, say, people of Their Class led lives composed entirely of beauty, graciousness, leisure, and servants who didn't jiggle the tea tray.

The penthouse seemed to her a little gaudy, a little difficult. With the stupidity of servants, it took her hours a day to prepare for even the simplest dinner party. It was like poor Eliot's having to dash out and be in his office in the dawn, at ten o'clock, and often give up his afternoons of golf because his clerks were so idiotically dumb that he couldn't trust them.

When they had taken the penthouse, a friend of Eleanor's had been so conservative as to buy a quiet little house in Turtle Bay and furnish it with English antiques. Mahogany. White fireplaces. Just a shack. But now Eleanor found the shack restful. The drawing room did not seem empty with but two of them for tea, and the little befrilled maid was not too humble, as she would have been in the vastnesses of the penthouse.

All the way home Eleanor looked wistfully out of the limousine. She wished that there weren't a law against her walking, this warm June evening. But she wanted to be walking, not on an avenue but in a real certificated English lane — rosy cottages, old women curtsying, nightingales rising from the hedges, or whatever nightingales do rise from; witty chatter at the gate with their neighbor, General Wimble-dom, former C. in C.<sup>1</sup> in India; not one of these horrid New Yorkers who talk about bond issues.

When Eliot dragged home, hot, his eyes blurred with weariness, he groaned at Eleanor, "I'm glad we're not going out tonight! Let's dine on the terrace."

"But we are going out, my pet! I'm restless. I can't stand this private Grand Central. I feel like a redcap. Let's go to that nice little French speak-easy on Forty-ninth and try to make ourselves believe we've had sense enough to go to Europe."

"All right. I wish we had gone. If nothing begins to happen in the market — Maybe we'll be abroad before the summer's over."

The Chez Edouard has, like all distinguished French restaurants, a Swiss manager, Czech waiters, a Bavarian cook, a Greek coat checker, and scenes from Venice painted on the walls of a decayed drawing room, and, unlike most of them, it has German wine. Eleanor crooned over the thought of onion soup, chicken cutlet Pojarski, *crêpes Suzette*, and *Oppenheimer Kreuz Spätzle*.

"America — New York — isn't so bad after all, if you belong, if you know where to go," exulted Eleanor.

Then the waiter wouldn't wait.

Eleanor raised a gracious finger, Eleanor raised an irritated hand, Eliot sank so low as to snap his fingers, and the waiter merely leered at them and did not come. He was attending a noisy group of six businessmen, who were beginning a sound meal with six cocktails apiece — tip after each round.

"It's absolutely dreadful what America does even to good foreign servants!" Eleanor raged. "They become so impertinent and inefficient! It's something in the air of this awful country. They're so selfish and inconsiderate — and yet so nice as long as they stay abroad. I wish we were there — in Europe — where we could lead a civilized life."

"Yes," said Eliot. "Little inns. Nice."

When they were finally served with chicken cutlets Pojarski, and Eleanor had come to believe that after all she would live through it,

<sup>1</sup> C. in C.: Commander in Chief.

she encountered the most terrible affliction of all. One of the six noisy interlopers wambled across and addressed her: "Sister, I just noticed we're taking more of the waiter's time than we ought to. You had to bawl him out before he brought your chicken croquettes. Excuse us! If you and the gentleman would come over and join us in a little libation — Excuse the liberty, but we've got some pretty decent, old-fashioned, housebroken rye, and if we could have the pleasure — "

During this shocking affront Eleanor had gaped at Eliot in terror. He rescued her in a brave and high-toned manner; he said dryly to the intruder, "Very kind of you, but we have quite enough to drink here, thank you, and we must be going immediately."

"Imagine a dreadful thing like that happening in any other country! England, for instance!" Eleanor murmured afterward. "Simply no privacy anywhere in America. Dreadful! Let's get out of this dreadful restaurant."

Nor was she any the more pleased when the checking girl, whisking her white flannel topcoat across the counter, gurgled, "Here you are, dearie."

"And no respect for their betters! Just Bolsheviks!" pronounced Eleanor.

They had sent away the car. Eleanor — as a girl she had often walked six miles on a picnic — suggested to Eliot, "It would be awfully jolly and adventurous to walk home!"

They came on the new Titanic Talkie Theater — Cooled Air — Capacity 4,000. Eliot yawned, "Ever been in one of these super-movie palaces? I never have. Let's see what it's like."

"You know what it will be like. Dreadful. Vulgar. But let's see."

The lobby was a replica, but somewhat reduced, of Seville Cathedral. A bowing doorman, in gold lace, scarlet tunic, and a busby with a purple plume, admitted them through gilded bronze doors to an inner lobby, walled with silk tapestry, floored with the largest Oriental rug in the world, and dotted with solid silver statues of negligent ladies, parakeets in golden cages on pedestals of Chinese lacquer, a fountain whose stream was illuminated with revolving lights, lemon-colored and green and crimson, and vast red club chairs beside which, for ash receivers, were Florentine wine jars.

"Oh! This hurts!" wailed Eleanor.

A line of ushers, young men in the uniforms of West Point cadets, stood at attention. One of them galloped forward and, bending from the waist, held out a white-gloved hand for their tickets.



"I'm paralyzed! This is like an opium eater's dream of a mid-Victorian royal palace. Must we go in?" fretted Eleanor.

"No! Let's go home. Think how nice a cool Tom Collins would be on the terrace," said Eliot, and to the usher: "Thanks, I think we've seen enough."

The stateliness, the choiceness and aristocracy of their exit were a little crumpled by the military usher's blatting behind them, "Well, can you lay that! The Prince of Wales and Tex Guinan — that's who they are!" And at the door they heard from a comfortable woman enthroned in a tall Spanish chair, addressing her lady friend, "I always did like a good artistic talkie with Doug Fairbanks and some old antique castles, and like that. I can't stand this low-down sex stuff. Gotta have art or nothing."

Eleanor had lived in New York so long that she rarely saw it. She did tonight, with liveliness and hatred.

Broadway was turned into a county fair, with orange-juice stands, pineapple-juice stands, show windows with nuts arranged in circles and diamonds, radio shops blaring, shops jammed with clothing models draped in aching brown suits with green shirts, green ties, green-bordered handkerchiefs. The people on Broadway Eleanor lumped as "impossible" — hoarse newsboys, Hungarians and Sicilians and Polish Jews guffawing on corners, tight-mouthed men with gray derbies concealing their eyes, standing in snarling conferences, silk-stockinged girls laughing like grackles.

"Dreadful!" she observed.

They looked east to a skyscraper like a gigantic arm threatening the sky with the silver mace that was its tower.

"Our buildings are so big and pretentious! Nothing kindly, nothing civilized about them. So — oh, so new!" complained Eleanor.

"Um — yes," said Eliot.

At home, from their terrace, they looked across the East River, then south and west to the wriggling electricity of Broadway, where tawdry signs, high on hotels, turned crimson and gold and aching white with hysterical quickness. A searchlight wounded the starless dark. And the noises scratched her nerves. Once she had felt that together they made a symphony; now she distinguished and hated them. Tugboats brayed and howled on the river. Trains on the three elevated railways clanked like monstrous shaken chains, and street-cars bumped with infuriating dullness. A million motors snarled, four million motor tires together joined in a vast hissing, like torn silk, and through all the uproar smashed the gong of an ambulance.

"Let's get out of it! Let's have a house in England!" cried Eleanor. "Peace! Civilized society! Perfect servants! Old tradition! Let's go!"

In the offices of Messrs. Trottingham, Strusby and Beal, Estate Agents, London, Eliot and Eleanor, once they had convinced a severe lady reception clerk that, though they were Americans, they really did want to lease a house, were shown a portfolio of houses with such ivy-dripping Tudor walls, such rose gardens, such sunny slopes of lawn between oaks ancient as Robin Hood, that they wriggled like children in a candy shop. They had been well trained by reading fiction and the comic papers; they knew enough not to laugh when they read "16 bd., 2 bthrms., usual offices, choice fernery, stbling., 12, garge., 1 car." So they were taken into favor, and young Mr. Claude Beal himself drove them down to Tiberius Hall, in Sussex.

"The Hall," he said, "belongs to Sir Horace and Lady Mingo. You will remember that Sir Horace was formerly solicitor general."

"Oh, yes," said Eliot.

"Quite," said Eleanor.

"Sir Horace wishes to rent only because his health is not good. He is no longer a young man. He requires a hotter climate. He is thinking of Italy. Naturally Lady Mingo and he hate to leave so charming a place, you will understand."

"I see," said Eliot.

"Hush," said Eleanor.

"But if they find really reliable tenants, they might — you see? But you understand that I'm not trying to do a bit of selling, as you Yankees say."

"I see. Yes," said Eliot.

They passed through the gateway of Tiberius Hall — the stone gateposts were worn by three centuries — and saw the gatekeeper's lodge. On the shoulder of the stone chimney were gargoyles that had looked on the passing Queen Elizabeth, and before the latticed windows, with crocus-yellow curtains, were boxes of red geraniums.

Laburnums edged the quarter mile of driveway and shut off most of the estate, but they saw a glade with deer feeding in a mistiness of tender sunlight. "Not," mused Eleanor, "like our dreadful, glaring, raw sunlight at home." They came suddenly on the Hall. It was of Tudor, pure, the stone mellow. The chimneys were fantastically twisted; the red-tiled roof was soft with mosses; the tall windows of the ground floor gave on a terrace of ancient flagging. But what

grasped at her, caressed her, more than the house itself was the lawn at one side where, under the shadow of oaks, half a dozen people sat in basket chairs at tea, attended by a butler whose cheeks were venerable pouches of respectability, and by a maid fresh as a mint drop in her cap and apron.

"We're going to take it," Eleanor whispered.

"We certainly are!"

"Here, we'll really live!"

"Yes! Tea, with servants like that! Polo and golf with gentlemen, not with moneygrubbers! Neighbors who've actually read a book! Nell, we've come home!"

"This country," said Sir Horace Mingo, "has gone utterly to the dogs."

"It has indeed," said Lady Mingo. "No competent servants since the war. Not one. The wages they demand, and their incredible stupidity — impossible to find a cook who can do a gooseberry trifle properly — and their impertinence! Did I tell you how pertly Bindger answered me when I spoke to her about staying out till ten?"

"You did, beloved. *In extenso*, if you will permit me to say so. I agree with you. My man — and to think of paying him twenty-two bob<sup>1</sup> a week; when I was a youngster the fellow would have been delighted to have ten — he cannot press trousers so that they won't resemble bags. 'Higgs,' I often say to him, 'I don't quite understand why it is that when you have given your loving attention to my trousers they always resemble bags'; and as to his awakening me when I tell him to, he never fails to be either five minutes late or, what is essentially more annoying, ten minutes early, and when your confounded Bindger brings my tea in the morning it is invariably cold, and if I speak to her about it she merely sniffs and tosses her head and — but —"

While Sir Horace is catching his breath it must be interjected that this conversation of the Mingos, before the James II fireplace at Tiberius Hall, had been patriotically enjoyed three months before Eliot and Eleanor Hopkins, on their penthouse terrace, had decided to flee from the land of electricity and clamor.

"But," rumbled Sir Horace, in that port-and-Stilton voice which had made him the pursuing fiend to the sinful when he had been solicitor general, "the fact that in the entire length and breadth of England today, and I dare say Scotland as well, it is utterly impossi-

<sup>1</sup> bob: slang for shilling, about twenty-five cents.

ble, at any absurd wage, to find a servant who is not lazy, ignorant, dirty, thieving — and many of them dare to be impertinent, even to me! — this indisputable decay in English service is no more alarming than the fact that in our own class, good manners, sound learning, and simple decency appear to have vanished. Young men up at Oxford who waste their time on socialism and chemistry — chemistry! for a gentleman! — instead of acquiring a respectable knowledge of the classics! Young women who smoke, curse, go about exhibiting their backs — ”

“ Horace! ”

“ Well, they do! I’m scarcely to blame, am I? Have I ever gone about exhibiting my back? Have I caused whole restaurants to be shocked by the spectacle of my back? And that is not all. Everywhere! The pictures instead of Shakespeare! Motors making our lanes a horror and a slaughter! Shops that have electric lights and enormous windows and everything save honest wares and shop attendants with respectful manners! Shopkeepers setting themselves up to be better and certainly richer than the best county families! In fact, the whole blasted country becoming Americanized. . . . And cocktails! Cocktails! My word, if anybody had ever offered my old father a cocktail, I should think he would have knocked him down! ”

“ England has always had a bad climate. But there was a day when the manners of the gentry and the charms of domestic life made up for it. But now I can see no reason why we should remain here. Why can’t we go to Italy? That fellow Mussolini, he may not be English, but he has taught the masses discipline. You don’t find impertinent servants and obscene gentlewomen there, I’ll wager! ”

“ Yes. Why don’t we go, Horace? ”

“ How can we? With this expensive place on our hands? If I were some petrol johnny, or a City bloke, or someone who had made his money selling spurious remedies, we might be able to afford it. But having been merely a servant of His Majesty all my life, merely devoting such legal knowledge and discernment as I might chance to have to the cause of justice and — ”

“ But we might rent the place, Horace. Oh! Think of a jolly little villa at San Remo or on Lake Maggiore, with the lovely sunshine and mountains and those too sweet Italian servants who retain some sense of the dignity and joy of service! ”

“ Rent it to whom — whom? Our class are all impoverished. ”

“ But there’s the Argentines and Americans and Armenians. You know. All those curious A races where everyone is a millionaire.

How they would appreciate a place with lawns! I'm told there isn't a single pretty lawn in America. How could there be? They would be so glad — ”

“ Though I couldn't imagine any American being trusted with our Lord Penzance sweetbriers! ”

“ But, Horace, a sweet little peasant villa at Baveno; just ten or twelve rooms.”

“ Well — After all, Victoria, why should people of some breeding, as I flatter myself we do possess, be shut up in this shocking country, when we might be in the sun of Italy — and Dr. Immens-Bourne says it would be so much better for my rheumatism. Shall we speak to an estate agent? If there are any honest and mannerly estate johnnys left in this atrocious country! ”

On the terrace of crumbling pink and yellow tiles, sufficiently shaded by the little orange trees in pots, Sir Horace and Lady Mingo sat looking across Lake Maggiore to the bulk of Sasso del Ferro, along whose mountain trails perched stone villages. A small steamer swagged up the lake; after its puffing there was no sound save goat bells and a clattering cart.

“ Oh, the peace of it! Oh, the wise old peace of Italy! ” sighed Lady Mingo, and the wrinkles in her vellumlike cheeks seemed smoother, her pale old eyes less weary.

“ Yes! ” said Sir Horace. He was not so pontifical as he had been at Tiberius Hall. “ Peace. No jazz! No noisy English servants yelping music-hall songs and banging things about! ”

From the kitchen, a floor below the terrace, a sound of the cook banging his copper pots, and a maid yelping a few bars of *Traviata*.

“ Yes! The sweet Italian servants! So gay and yet so polite! Smiling! And the lovely sun all day! Why we ever stayed — Oh, Horace, I do hope I shan't be punished for saying such things. Of course England is the greatest country in the world, and when I think of people like my father and the dean, of course no other country could ever produce great gentlemen like them, but at the same time, I really don't care if we never leave Italy again! And those sweet ruins at Fiesole! And the trains always quite absolutely on time since Mussolini came! And — Oh, Horace, it's really quite too simply perfect! ”

“ Rather! Quite! You know, I'd thought I should worry about Tiberius Hall. But that's a very decent chap — that Hoffman Eliot — Hopkins — Eliot Hopkins — what is the chap's absurd name? —

quite gentlemanly, for an American. I was astonished. None of these strange clothes Americans wear. I really quite took him for an English gentleman, until he opened his mouth. Astonishing! He hadn't a red sweater or a great, huge felt hat or a velvet dinner jacket, or any of these odd things that Americans ordinarily wear. And now we must dress, my dear. Professor Pulciano will be here at half after seven. So decent of him to rent us this — this paradise! ”

He was youngish and rather rich; but Carlo Pulciano had not remained in the Italian army after the war, though his brother was commanding general of one of the departments, nor would he listen to his sister-in-law's insistence that he blossom in the *salons* of Rome.

He had previously scandalized them by teaching economics in the University of Pisa, by sitting over buckram-bound books full of tedious figures, and when the Black Shirts had marched on Rome and taken over the country, when it was not wise to speculate too much about economics, Pulciano had the more offended his people by buying this largish villa on the Pallanza peninsula at Lake Maggiore and retiring to his books and bees.

But in that still paradise he became restless and a little confused. All through the morning he would, in discussions none the less mad because they were entirely within his head, be completely pro-Fascist, admiring the Fascist discipline, the ideal of planned industry, the rousing of youngsters from sun loafing into drilling. Then, all afternoon, he would be communistic or Social Democratic.

But whatever he was, here he was forever nothing. He had no one with whom to talk. It was not safe. And to Carlo Pulciano talking was life; talking late at night, feverishly, over cigarettes and *Lacrima Cristi*<sup>1</sup>; talking on dusty walks; talking through elegant dinners so ardently that he did not notice whether he was eating veal stew or *zabaglione*.<sup>2</sup> Forever talking!

He would not have minded turning Fascist complete, provided he might have lived in a place where everyone hated *Fascismo*, so that furiously, all night, he might have defended it. He admitted, with one of the few grins this earnest young man ever put on, that he didn't so much want any particular social system as the freedom to discuss, in any way, at any time, over any kind of liquor, all social systems.

He longed for Germany, where he had studied economics as a young man. Germany! There was the land where he could talk unend-

<sup>1</sup> *Lacrima Cristi*: an Italian wine with the strange name Tears of Christ.

<sup>2</sup> *zabaglione*: an Italian confection made of egg yolks, sugar, and wine.

ingly! There was the land where, though the *Polizei*<sup>1</sup> might harry you off the grass, you could say precisely what you thought or, greater luxury yet, say what you didn't think at all, just for the pleasure of it.

Pulciano cursed the fact that he had sunk most of his money in this villa and could not afford to go live in Germany. He had loved Italy; for it he had been wounded on the Piave. He had loved this villa and the peace of its blue lake waters. He had come to hate them both.

He hated the servants — so ready to promise everything and so unlikely to do anything; so smiling of eye and so angry in their hearts. He hated the climate. "It would be in Italy that we have the chilliest and wettest winters in Christendom, yet the mushheaded people insist it's always sunny and will not put in even fireplaces." He hated the food. "I'd give all the confounded pastes and fruits in the world for a decent *Mass* of dark beer and a pig's knuckle at Munich!" He hated funeral processions, policemen with cocks' plumes on their hats, plaster shrines, the silly wicker on wine bottles, wax matches that burned his fingers, and even — so far was he gone in treason against Italy — cigars with straws in them. But he did nothing about it. He was too busy hating to do much of anything.

He was delighted when the manager of the Grand Hotel d'Isola Bella came inquiring whether he might not care to lease his villa to a crazy English nobleman named Sir Mingo. Yes, for a year.

A week later, with many bundles and straw suitcases, Carlo Pulciano was on the train for Berlin and free talk, freethinking — long free thoughts over long cheap beers.

The doctrine of most American and British caricaturists, and all French ones, is that every German is fat, towheaded, and given to vast beers, while every German woman is still fatter, and clad invariably in a chip hat and the chintz covering for a wing chair.

Baron Helmuth von Mittenbach, Silesian Junker<sup>2</sup> and passionate mechanical engineer, had ruddy hair and blue eyes filled with light. He was slender, and looked rather more English than the Prince of Wales. The Baroness, Hilda, was slim as an icicle and as smooth, and she liked dancing in the night clubs off the Kurfürstendamm, in Berlin, till four of the morning. Neither of them liked beer, nor had ever drunk it since school days.

During the war, which ended when he was thirty, Helmuth had tried to join the flying circus of his friend Von Richthofen. He would have enjoyed swooping, possibly even being swooped upon. But he

<sup>1</sup> *Polizei*: police. (German.) <sup>2</sup> *Junker*: a young German aristocrat.

was too good a designer, and headquarters kept him improving the tank, and the one time when he sneaked off to try out his own tank at the front, they strafed him so that he stayed back of the line after that, fuming in a room verminous with steel shavings.

He was, therefore, more excited after the war than during it. Now he could take a real part! Now engineers were to be not assistants and yes men, like quartermasters or photographers or royal princes, but the real lords, shaping a new Germany.

He believed that the struggle to rebuild German glory would be a crusade holy and united. Now that the republic had come, with so little blood spilling, the political parties would join; the politicians would give up that ultimate selfishness of insisting on the superiority of their own ideals.

He was certain that the salvation of Germany was in industrial efficiency. They hadn't the man power and raw stuffs of America or Russia, nor the army of France, nor the ships and empire of Great Britain. They must make things more swiftly, better and more economically than any other land. They must no longer grudgingly adopt machinery when they had to admit that a machine could do the work of a hundred men, but take machinery as a religion.

Helmuth took it so. It is definitely not true that Helmuth and the youngish men who worked with him in those driving days thought mostly, or even much at all, about the profits they and their bosses might make out of machinery and rationalization. It was not true that they saw machinery as the oppressor of ordinary men. Rather, they saw it as the extension of man's force and dignity.

Here you had an ordinary human, with an ordinary, clumsy fist. Put a lever or an electric switch into it, and it had the power of a thousand elephants. Man that walked wearily, swam like a puppy, and flew not at all, man that had been weakest and most despicable of all the major mammals, was with motor and submarine and plane, with dynamo and linotype, suddenly to be not mammal at all but like the angels. So dreamed Baron Mittenbach, while he grunted and hunched his shoulders over his drawing board, while in the best parade-ground manner he called a careless foreman an accursed-swine-hound-thunder-weather-once-again-for-the-sake-of-Heaven.

He had gone as chief engineer to the great A. A. G. — the so-called Universal Automobile Trust. His hobbies were light, cheap tractors for small farms, and light, cheap cars. He planned sedans which would sell, when exchange was normal again, for what, in American, would be a hundred and fifty dollars. By night, at home, he planned



other devices, some idiotic, some blandly practical — eighteen-thousand-ton liners to leave out the swimming pools and marble pillars streaked like oxtail soup and to cross the Atlantic in three days; floating aviation fields, a string of fifteen of them across the ocean, so that a fallen plane would never be more than an hour from rescue; a parachute to ease down an entire plane, should the motor die or a wing drop off. Crazy as any other poet, and as excited. But happier.

He had reason at first for his excitement and his happiness. Though the Germans gabbled of every known political scheme, from union with Russia to union with England, they jumped into the deification of modern industry as schoolboys into a summer lake. They worked ten hours a day, twelve, fourteen, not wearily but with a zest in believing that their sweat was cementing a greater Germany. They ruthlessly stripped factories and at whatever cost put in rows of chemical retorts a quarter mile long, conveyer belts, automatic oil furnaces, high-speed steel.

Helmuth was fortunate in being able to have a decent and restful house not too far from his factory, for though he drove at a speed which caused the police to look pained, he could not, he told himself, take all morning getting to work. There were too many exciting things to do. The factory was in the Spandau district of Berlin, and reasonably near, among the placid villas and linden rows of Grünewald, Hilda and Helmuth took a brick-and-stucco house with a mosaic eagle shining over the tile balcony.

The attic floor had been a private gaming room. Snorting at these signs of idleness and pride, Helmuth stripped out the card tables, roulette wheel, billiard table, dumped them in the basement, and set up a lathe, a workbench, a drawing board, an electric furnace.

Here all evening, while Hilda restlessly studied Russian or yawned over crossword puzzles, this grandson of a field marshal, in a workman's jumper and atrocious felt slippers, experimented with aluminum alloys or drew plans of a monorail which would do the six hundred and sixty miles from Berlin to Paris in six hours, with carriages like drawing rooms, glass-walled, twenty feet wide.

It was a good time — for a year. The destruction of the currency did not worry Helmuth; he was convinced that man should be saved by gasoline alone. But after two years, or three, he roused from his dream to see that the German recovery was not altogether a pure, naïve crusade; that the politicians would not forget their petty little differences. There were not two or three parties, as in Britain and America, but eight, ten, a dozen; and these parties clamorously ad-

vocated almost everything save total immersion. They advocated the return of the Kaiser, or immediate communism; they advocated a cautious state socialism, or wider power for the industrialists; they advocated combining with Austria, or the independence of Bavaria.

Outside the political parties, there were some thousands of noisy and highly admired prophets who had no interest in Helmuth's turret lathes and r.p.m.'s, but who shouted in little halls and little blurry magazines that the world was to be saved by vegetarianism, or going naked, or abolishing armies, or integrating spoken plays with the movie film, or growing carrots instead of wheat, or colonizing Brazil, or attending spiritualist seances, or mountain climbing, or speaking Esperanto.

In his worship of clean, driving, unsentimental steel, Helmuth despised equally all cult mongers and all politicians, however famous. They talked; they chewed over old straw; they pushed themselves into personal notoriety. He didn't, just now, care a hang whether he lived under a democracy or a monarchy or a soviet, so long as they would let him make more tractors.

The more eloquent the politicians were, in their bright oratory in the Reichstag or the jolly conferences at Lausanne and Geneva, the more he hated them. His gods were Duisberg and Citroen and Ford and Edison and the Wright brothers, and since most of the pantheon were Americans, he came to worship that country as his Olympus.

The German politicians talked — all the Germans talked, he snarled. They were so proud of having mental freedom. Yes, snorted Helmuth, and the Irish were so proud of having fairies! Freedom for what — for escape from discipline into loquacious idleness, or for the zest of hard work? He hated peculiarly — doubtless unjustly — the intellectuals whom he had known in the university, who gabbled that there was something inescapably evil about machines; that because the transition from handicrafts to machinery had certainly produced unemployment, this unemployment must always continue; who whimpered that we must all go back to the country and live perfectly simple old-fashioned lives — with, however, telephones and open plumbing and typewriters and automobiles and electric lights and quick mail and newspapers.

"Yah! My picture of those gentry," Helmuth grumbled to Hilda, "is that they sit in machine-made modernistic metal chairs, telephoning to one another that they want us to stop manufacturing telephones and just beautifully write them! Good night. Tomorrow I must be up early and write a carburetor and sculp a grease gun."

Thus irritated, he looked daily more toward America. There, he believed, everybody was united in the one common purpose of solving economic injustices, not by turning every capitalist into a starved proletarian but by making all competent proletarians into capitalists. The more he read American magazines and yearned for American vitality and ingenuity, the more he grumbled about Germany. And his Hilda, who was most of the time happily ignorant of everything he was saying, here joined him.

In America, she had heard, there was no need of servants, because everything was done, and perfectly, by machinery. And she was so sick, she confided, of German servants since the war. What had got into them? Regular communists! They no longer had respect for the better classes, and the government was supporting them in their demands. What with compulsory insurance and the law that you couldn't, without notice, kick out even the most impertinent maid, there was no running a house. She longed for electric dishwashers and washing machines, but their landlord was old-fashioned; he would not put them in.

America!

Just when Helmuth and Hilda were keenest about it, he met McPherson Jones, of the Engel & Jones High Speed Tractor Company of Long Island City, who was scouting about Europe looking for new efficiencies. Helmuth spoke a photographic English. Jones and he went to Essen, to the Ruhr, and argued about beer and about torque in aviation. Jones offered him a place high on the staff of Engel & Jones, with a breath-taking salary; and a month later Helmuth and Hilda were on the high seas — to the miserable Hilda it was evident why they were called high.

Helmuth had sublet his house to an Italian, a Professor Carlo Pulciano, who was going to study something or other at the university. Helmuth did not leave Berlin till a fortnight after he had turned the house over to Pulciano. He called to say good-by, and Pulciano proudly showed him the changes he had made. On the top floor Helmuth did a little youthful suffering. Pulciano had ripped out the lathe, the workbench, the drawing board, and fitted up the room in imitation of an old Bavarian inn, with heavy wooden tables, stone beer mugs, a barrel of beer, and painted mottoes announcing that men who gave earnest attention to anything save drinking, kissing, singing, and snoring were invariably jackasses.

“I tell you,” cried Pulciano, “here I shall have again the good free talk of my German student days! I am in your Germany so happy!

You Germans realize that the purpose of life is not just doing, but thinking, and setting thoughts in jeweled words — and again I get decent red cabbage! ”

“ *Ja?* ” said Helmuth. It can sound extraordinarily like “ Yeah? ”

He groaned to himself, “ Just the old, thick-necked, beer-steaming Germany we have been trying to kill! I want a race stark and lean and clear and cold-bathed and unafraid of the song of flywheels! ”

With Hilda seasick, Helmuth found solace in the smoking room of the steamer. By the end of three days he knew a dozen Americans — a banker, the superintendent of a steel plant, two automobile-foreign-sales men, a doctor who had been studying gross pathology in Vienna.

He expected them to resent his coming to America in rivalry with their earnings; he expected them to smile at his English. But they welcomed him to the tournament. “ Come on! If you can get anything away from us in America, it just makes the game better,” they said; and: “ Your English? Listen, baron. The only trouble with you is, you went to a school where they let the teams weaken themselves by looking at books between the halves. By the way, will you happen to be in Detroit, time of the Michigan-Notre Dame game? Wish you’d come stay with us and I’ll drive you down. Like to have you meet the wife and show her up — she thinks she can parley Deutsch.”

“ They are,” Helmuth glowed to Hilda, “ the kindest and politest people I have ever known. But just the same, *ich sage Dir bestimmt*,<sup>1</sup> that Mr. Tolson is all wrong about the front-wheel drive. . . . I wonder about the market for speedboats in Norway? ”

He had accepted invitations to Bar Harbor, Seattle, Moose Jaw, Gramercy Square, Franconia Notch, and Social Circle, Georgia, before he saw the skyscrapers from New York harbor.

“ They are my friends! I have never had so many friends — not in my life! ” he rejoiced, and with a feeling that the towers of New York were his own, he pointed them out to a slightly shaky Hilda beside him.

“ They are very pretty. They are not all worn, like cathedral spires,” he said. “ I wonder what the wind pressure per square meter is with a sixty-kilometer wind? I wonder if electric welding costs more than riveting? I wonder whether the marble here comes from Italy or Vermont? Yes, it is exciting; I am very thrilled. . . . I wonder what is the tensile strength of the steel in these buildings? ”

<sup>1</sup> *ich sage Dir bestimmt*: I tell you definitely. (German.)

But his friend, Dr. Moore, the Omaha surgeon, could not answer any of these obvious questions, though he was a real American.

A week after their arrival, Baron and Baroness Mittenbach leased a penthouse atop the apartment house at 9999 Park Avenue. It belonged to some people named Hopkins, now living in the south of England.

They took possession on an autumn afternoon. Hilda raced through the great living room ecstatically. "I say to you, Helmuth, so a beautiful room have I never seen! Stone walls! And the rafters! Windows like a cathedral! And the organ, quite gold! It is no larger than the Great Hall in my father's *Schloss*, but so much more wonderful. Always I hated those tattered tapestries and the moldy stag horns! But this room is indeed something noble!"

Squealing, with Helmuth beside her and not much less childish, she explored the wonders of the kitchen and butler's pantry — electric dishwasher and coffee urn and toaster and vacuum cleaner and clock and egg cooker. She couldn't quite make out the electric waffle iron; she wasn't sure whether it was for cooking or pleating. But on the automatic refrigerator they both fell with shouts. This was a possession they had envied their richer friends in Berlin. They cautiously pulled out an ice tray and gazed with fatuous admiration on the beautiful cubes of ice.

"Much better than diamonds," said Helmuth.

Refrigerator, gas stove, small electric range, luxurious enameled sink and kitchen cabinet were all finished in white and canary yellow; the kitchen was gayer than any boudoir.

"Already I am a — how is it called? — hunnerd-procent American," observed Helmuth in what he believed to be English. "The old system, it was to make beautiful the salon and the chapel, and make hateful the kitchen, the heart of the house. Yes, I am a modern! We do something, we engineers. We do not believe that the more a room is used, the less *gemütlich*<sup>1</sup> it should be. Modern, yes, and very old. We go back to medieval days, when men were not ashamed to eat and love, and when kitchens were more important than reception rooms, and when —"

"Here," said Hilda, "I would be happy if we had no servants at all, and I did all the work. I shall cook the dinner — tomorrow. Tonight let us find that lovely spikizzy — is right? — of which the doctor has spoken on the steamer."

When, on the wine list of the Chez Edouard, they found an *Oppen-*

<sup>1</sup> *gemütlich*: pleasant. (German.)

*heimer Kreuz Spättese*, they asked each other why anyone should go to Europe. Their only trouble was that the waiter was a bit slow. But they understood, for he was much engaged with a jolly group of six men at the next table.

One of the six noticed the plight of the Von Mittenbachs and, coming to their table, said, "Sorry we're grabbing off so much of the waiter's time. Afraid we're holding up your dinner. So, meanwhile — if you'll excuse the liberty — won't you folks come have a drink with us?"

"That would be very nice," said Helmuth.

He was, after all, a shy young man, and he was grateful for the way in which these strangers took him in. They were all, it seemed, in motor manufacturing. When they learned that he had just come from Germany to join them, instantly a card was out of every pocket, an address was scribbled, and each had insisted that when he went to South Bend, or Toledo, or Detroit, he must dine with them — "and I hope the missus will be along with you."

In a glow that burned out of him all the loneliness he had felt that afternoon in the cold shadow of the monstrous skyscrapers, Helmuth returned with Hilda to their table and dinner.

"So kind to a foreigner, a poor unknown engineer," said Helmuth. "No wonder no American ever wants to go abroad for more than a visit of a month!"

From the terrace before their penthouse they stared across the East River, then south and west to the wriggling electricity of Broadway. They were thirty stories up; they seemed to be looking on the whole world, but a world transformed into exultant light.

"It is as though we were in a castle on a huge sheer cliff, a castle on the Matterhorn himself, and yet in the midst of Berlin and London and Paris joined into one," said Helmuth. "This is perhaps — not true, Hilda? — the greatest spectacle of the world! Why speak they of the Acropolis, the Colosseum, the Rhineland, when they have this magic?"

Tugboats shouted cheerily on the East River; liners roared gallantly from the North River; the elevated trains, streaks of golden light, chanted on their three tracks; and the million motor horns spoke of the beautiful and exciting places to which the cars were going.

"And it's ours now! We've found our home! We shall know all this city, all those people in the lovely motors down there! I think we stay here the rest of our lives!" said Helmuth.

Hilda pondered, "Yes, except — except neither Germany nor America has any mystery. I want us someday to go to China, Japan. There it gives mystery. And I hear the servants are divine, and so cheap. Don't you think we might go live in China — soon?"

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Do you understand the title? Each of these groups of people has practically the same point of view. What is it?

2. Notice how in the very first sentence Mr. Lewis makes fun of T. Eliot Hopkins, an apparently successful man. Point out the contrast between his career and that of Mr. Lewis himself. Pick out several other passages in which the author is satirizing characters in the story or attitudes they exhibit.

3. One of the trade-marks of Mr. Lewis's style is his habit of listing specific details for purposes of satire. Find examples of such listing and read them aloud. When you catch their tone of mockery, you have heard the authentic voice of Sinclair Lewis.

4. Do the characters seem like cartoons, or like photographs? Explain.

5. Which of your opinions — ones you have always taken for granted — does this story challenge?

6. Show that this story has no true plot. Compare the ending of this story with that of "The Whirligig of Life."

7. Vocabulary: ecstatic, jodhpurs, spurious, pontifical, deification, immersion, pantheon, proletarian, rationalization, verminous.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

8. Sinclair Lewis is a satirist who gives us pictures of life exaggerated to bring out some particular trait which seems to him to merit ridicule. In this story he speaks of *caricaturists* (page 150), men who in drawings exaggerate peculiarities as the satirist does in writing. In any campaign year you can find in newspaper cartoons *caricatures* of prominent candidates which will show you how the real appearance of men is exaggerated to make the impression which best suits the political interests of a newspaper. Another sort of exaggerated image mentioned in the story is a *gargoyle* (page 145). Find a picture of a *gargoyle* in the encyclopedia and see if you can tell why *gargoyles* have been described as "caricatures on the whole animal kingdom."

## WILBUR DANIEL STEELE (1886- )

Wilbur Daniel Steele belongs to both the North and the South, the East and the West. He was born in North Carolina, graduated from the University of Denver, studied art in Boston and New York, and has resided in Nantucket, Massachusetts, in the midst of the Cape Cod life he portrays so well in many of his stories. Twenty years ago he had no recognized superior in the field of the American short story, and today he still rates high.

## FOOTFALLS

"This is not an easy story," says Mr. Steele in his first sentence. But when you have forgotten many of the short stories of this collection you will still remember Boaz Negro, the blind Portuguese cobbler, listening through nine years for the footfalls of "that *cachorra*." You will remember the "act of almost incredible violence" with which the story ends.

THIS IS not an easy story; not a road for tender or for casual feet. Better the meadows. Let me warn you, it is as hard as that old man's soul and as sunless as his eyes. It has its inception in catastrophe, and its end in an act of almost incredible violence; between them it tells barely how one long blind can become also deaf and dumb.

He lived in one of those old Puritan sea towns where the strain has come down austere and moribund, so that his act would not be quite unbelievable. Except that the town is no longer Puritan and Yankee. It has been betrayed; it has become an outpost of the Portuguese islands.

This man, this blind cobbler himself, was a Portuguese from St. Michael, in the Western Islands, and his name was Boaz Negro.

He was happy. An unquenchable exuberance lived in him. When he arose in the morning he made vast, as it were uncontrollable, gestures with his stout arms. He came into his shop singing. His voice, strong and deep as the chest from which it emanated, rolled out through the doorway and along the street, and the fishermen, done with their morning work and lounging and smoking along the wharves, said, "Boaz is to work already." Then they came up to sit in the shop.

In that town a cobbler's shop is a club. One sees the interior always dimly thronged. They sit on the benches watching the artisan at his work for hours, and they talk about everything in the world. A cobbler is known by the company he keeps.



Boaz Negro kept young company. He would have nothing to do with the old. On his own head the gray hairs set thickly.

He had a grown son. But the benches in his shop were for the lusty and valiant young, men who could spend the night drinking, and then at three o'clock in the morning turn out in the rain and dark to pull at the weirs, sing songs, buffet one another among the slippery fish in the boat's bottom, and make loud jokes about the fundamental things, love and birth and death. Harkening to their boasts and strong prophecies, his breast heaved and his heart beat faster. He was a large, full-blooded fellow, fashioned for exploits; the flame in his darkness burned higher even to hear of them.

It is scarcely conceivable how Boaz Negro could have come through this much of his life still possessed of that unquenchable and priceless exuberance; how he would sing in the dawn; how, simply listening to the recital of deeds in gale or brawl, he could easily forget himself a blind man, tied to a shop and a last; easily make of himself a lusty young fellow breasting the sunlit and adventurous tide of life.

He had had a wife, whom he had loved. Fate, which had scourged him with the initial scourge of blindness, had seen fit to take his Angelina away. He had had four sons. Three, one after another, had been removed, leaving only Manuel, the youngest. Recovering slowly, with agony, from each of these recurrent blows, his unquenchable exuberance had lived. And there was another thing quite as extraordinary. He had never done anything but work, and that sort of thing may kill the flame where an abrupt catastrophe fails. Work in the dark. Work, work, work! And accompanied by privation; an almost miserly scale of personal economy. Yes, indeed, he had "skinned his fingers," especially in the earlier years. When it tells most.

How he had worked! Not alone in the daytime, but also sometimes, when orders were heavy, far into the night. It was strange for one, passing along that deserted street at midnight, to hear issuing from the black shop of Boaz Negro the rhythmical tap-tap-tap of hammer on wooden peg.

Nor was that sound all: no man in town could get far past that shop in his nocturnal wandering unobserved. No more than a dozen footfalls, and from the darkness Boaz's voice rolled forth, fraternal, stentorian, "Good night, Antone!" "Good night to you, Caleb Snow!"

To Boaz Negro it was still broad day.

Now, because of this, he was what might be called a substantial man. He owned his place, his shop, opening on the sidewalk, and behind it the dwelling house with trellised galleries upstairs and down.

And there was always something for his son, a "piece for the pocket," a dollar, five, even a ten-dollar bill if he had "got to have it." Manuel was "a good boy." Boaz not only said this; he felt that he was assured of it in his understanding, to the infinite peace of his heart.

It was curious that he should be ignorant only of the one nearest to him. Not because he was physically blind. Be certain he knew more of other men and of other men's sons than they or their neighbors did. More, that is to say, of their hearts, their understandings, their idiosyncrasies, and their ultimate weight in the balance pan of eternity.

His simple explanation of Manuel was that Manuel "wasn't too stout." To others he said this, and to himself. Manuel was not indeed too robust. How should he be vigorous when he never did anything to make him so? He never worked. Why should he work, when existence was provided for, and when there was always that "piece for the pocket"? Even a ten-dollar bill on a Saturday night! No, Manuel "wasn't too stout."

In the shop they let it go at that. The missteps and frailties of everyone else in the world were canvassed there with the most shameless publicity. But Boaz Negro was a blind man, and in a sense their host. Those reckless, strong young fellows respected and loved him. It was allowed to stand at that. Manuel was "a good boy." Which did not prevent them, by the way, from joining later in the general condemnation of that father's laxity — "the ruination of the boy!"

"He should have put him to work, that's what."

"He should have said to Manuel, 'Look here, if you want a dollar, go earn it first.'"

As a matter of fact, only one man ever gave Boaz the advice direct. That was Campbell Wood. And Wood never sat in that shop.

In every small town there is one young man who is spoken of as "rising." As often as not he is not a native, but "from away."

In this town Campbell Wood was that man. He had come from another part of the state to take a place in the bank. He lived in the upper story of Boaz Negro's house, the ground floor now doing for Boaz and the meager remnant of his family. The old woman who came in to tidy up for the cobbler looked after Wood's rooms as well.

Dealing with Wood, one had first of all the sense of his incorruptibility. A little ruthless perhaps, as if one could imagine him, in de-

fense of his integrity, cutting off his friend, cutting off his own hand, cutting off the very stream flowing out from the wellsprings of human kindness. An exaggeration, perhaps.

He was by long odds the most eligible young man in town; good-looking in a spare, ruddy, sandy-haired Scottish fashion; important, incorruptible, "rising." But he took good care of his heart. Precisely that; like a sharp-eyed duenna to his own heart. One felt that here was the man, if ever was the man, who held his destiny in his own hand. Failing, of course, some quite gratuitous and unforeseeable catastrophe.

Not that he was not human, or even incapable of laughter or passion. He was, in a way, immensely accessible. He never clapped one on the shoulder; on the other hand, he never failed to speak. Not even to Boaz.

Returning from the bank in the afternoon, he had always a word for the cobbler. Passing out again to supper at his boarding place, he had another, about the weather, the prospects of rain. And if Boaz were at work in the dark when he returned from an evening at the Board of Trade, there was a "Good night, Mr. Negro!"

On Boaz's part, his attitude toward his lodger was curious and paradoxical. He did not pretend to anything less than reverence for the young man's position; precisely on account of that position he was conscious toward Wood of a vague distrust. This was because he was an uneducated fellow.

To the uneducated the idea of large finance is as uncomfortable as the idea of the law. It must be said for Boaz that, responsive to Wood's unfailing civility, he fought against this sensation of dim and somehow shameful distrust.

Nevertheless his whole parental soul was in arms that evening, when, returning from the bank and finding the shop empty of loungers, Wood paused a moment to propose the bit of advice already referred to.

"Haven't you ever thought of having Manuel learn the trade?" A suspicion, a kind of premonition, lighted the fires of defense.

"Shoemaking," said Boaz, "is good enough for a blind man."

"Oh, I don't know. At least it's better than doing nothing at all."

Boaz's hammer was still. He sat silent, monumental. Outwardly. For once his unfailing response had failed him, "Manuel ain't too stout, you know." Perhaps it had become suddenly inadequate.

He hated Wood; he despised Wood; more than ever before, a hundredfold more, quite abruptly, he distrusted Wood.

How could a man say such things as Wood had said? And where Manuel himself might hear!

Where Manuel *had* heard! Boaz's other emotions — hatred and contempt and distrust — were overshadowed. Sitting in darkness, no sound had come to his ears, no footfall, no infinitesimal creaking of a floor plank. Yet by some sixth uncanny sense of the blind he was aware that Manuel was standing in the dusk of the entry joining the shop to the house.

Boaz made a Herculean effort. The voice came out of his throat, harsh, bitter, and loud enough to have carried ten times the distance to his son's ears.

"Manuel is a good boy!"

"Yes — h'm — yes — I suppose so."

Wood shifted his weight. He seemed uncomfortable.

"Well. I'll be running along, I — ugh! Heavens!"

Something was happening. Boaz heard exclamations, breathings, the rustle of sleeve cloth in large, frantic, and futile graspings — all without understanding. Immediately there was an impact on the floor, and with it the unmistakable clink of metal. Boaz even heard that the metal was minted, and that the coins were gold. He understood. A coin sack, gripped not quite carefully enough for a moment under the other's overcoat, had shifted, slipped, escaped, and fallen.

And Manuel had heard!

It was a dreadful moment for Boaz, dreadful in its native sense, as full of dread. Why? It was a moment of horrid revelation, ruthless clarification. His son, his link with the departed Angelina, that "good boy" — Manuel, standing in the shadow of the entry, visible alone to the blind, had heard the clink of falling gold, and — *and Boaz wished that he had not!*

There, amazing, disconcerting, destroying, stood the sudden fact.

Sitting as impassive and monumental as ever, his strong, bleached hands at rest on his work, round drops of sweat came out on Boaz's forehead. He scarcely took the sense of what Wood was saying. Only fragments.

"Government money, understand — for the breakwater workings — huge — too many people know here, everywhere — don't trust the safe — tin safe — 'Noah's Ark' — give you my word — Heavens, no!"

It boiled down to this — the money, more money than was good for that antiquated "Noah's Ark" at the bank — and whose contemplated sojourn there overnight was public to too many minds — in

short, Wood was not only incorruptible, he was canny. To what one of those minds, now, would it occur that he should take away that money bodily, under casual cover of his coat, to his own lodgings behind the cobbler shop of Boaz Negro? For this one, this important night!

He was sorry the coin sack had slipped, because he did not like to have the responsibility of secret sharer cast upon anyone, even upon Boaz, even by accident. On the other hand, how tremendously fortunate that it had been Boaz and not another. So far as that went, Wood had no more anxiety now than before. One incorruptible knows another.

"I'd trust you, Mr. Negro" (that was one of the fragments which came and stuck in the cobbler's brain), "as far as I would myself. As long as it's only you. I'm just going up here and throw it under the bed. Oh, yes, certainly."

Boaz ate no supper. For the first time in his life food was dry in his gullet. Even under those other successive crushing blows of Fate the full and generous habit of his functionings had carried on unabated; he had always eaten what was set before him. Tonight, over his untouched plate, he watched Manuel with his sightless eyes, keeping track of his every mouthful, word, intonation, breath. What profit he expected to extract from this catlike surveillance it is impossible to say.

When they arose from the supper table Boaz made another Herculean effort. "Manuel, you're a good boy!"

The formula had a quality of appeal, of despair, and of command.

"Manuel, you should be short of money, maybe. Look, what's this? A tenner? Well, there's a piece for the pocket; go and enjoy yourself."

He would have been frightened had Manuel, upsetting tradition, declined the offering. With the morbid contrariness of the human imagination, the boy's avid grasping gave him no comfort.

He went out into the shop, where it was already dark, drew to him his last, his tools, mallets, cutters, pegs, leather. And having prepared to work, he remained idle. He found himself listening.

It has been observed that the large phenomena of sunlight and darkness were nothing to Boaz Negro. A busy night was broad day. Yet there was a difference; he knew it with the blind man's eyes, the ears.

Day was a vast confusion, or rather a wide fabric, of sounds; great and little sounds all woven together, voices, footfalls, wheels,

far-off whistles and foghorns, flies buzzing in the sun. Night was another thing. Still there were voices and footfalls, but rarer, emerging from the large, pure body of silence as definite, surprising, and yet familiar entities.

Tonight there was an easterly wind, coming off the water and carrying the sound of waves. So far as other fugitive sounds were concerned it was the same as silence. The wind made little difference to the ears. It nullified, from one direction at least, the other two visual processes of the blind, the sense of touch and the sense of smell. It blew away from the shop, toward the livinghouse.

As has been said, Boaz found himself listening, scrutinizing with an extraordinary attention, this immense background of sound. He heard footfalls. The story of that night was written, for him, in footfalls.

He heard them moving about the house, the lower floor, prowling here, there, halting for long spaces, advancing, retreating softly on the planks. About this aimless, interminable perambulation there was something to twist the nerves, something led and at the same time driven like a succession of frail and indecisive charges.

Boaz lifted himself from his chair. All his impulse called him to make a stir, join battle, cast in the breach the reinforcement of his presence, authority, good will. He sank back again; his hands fell down. The curious impotence of the spectator held him.

He heard footfalls, too, on the upper floor, a little fainter, borne to the inner rather than the outer ear, along the solid causeway of partitions and floor, the legs of his chair, the bony framework of his body. Very faint indeed. Sinking back easily into the background of the wind. They, too, came and went, this room, that, to the passage, the stairhead, and away. About them, too, there was the same quality of being led and at the same time of being driven.

Time went by. In his darkness it seemed to Boaz that hours must have passed. He heard voices. Together with the footfalls, that abrupt, brief, and (in view of Wood's position) astounding interchange of sentences made up his history of the night. Wood must have opened the door at the head of the stair; by the sound of his voice he would be standing there, peering below perhaps; perhaps listening.

"What's wrong down there?" he called. "Why don't you go to bed?"

After a moment, came Manuel's voice, "Ain't sleepy."

"Neither am I. Look here, do you like to play cards?"

"What kind? Euchre! I like euchre all right. Or pitch."

"Well, what would you say to coming up and having a game of euchre then, Manuel? If you can't sleep?"

"That'd be all right."

The lower footfalls ascended to join the footfalls on the upper floor. There was the sound of a door closing.

Boaz sat still. In the gloom he might have been taken for a piece of furniture, of machinery, an extraordinary lay figure, perhaps, for the trying on of the boots he made. He seemed scarcely to breathe, only the sweat starting from his brow giving him an aspect of life.

He ought to have run, and leaped up that inner stair and pounded with his fists on that door. He seemed unable to move. At rare intervals feet passed on the sidewalk outside, just at his elbow, so to say, and yet somehow, tonight, immeasurably far away. Beyond the orbit of the moon. He heard Rugg, the policeman, noting the silence of the shop, muttering, "Boaz is to bed tonight," as he passed.

The wind increased. It poured against the shop with its deep, continuous sound of a river. Submerged in its body, Boaz caught the note of the town bell striking midnight.

Once more, after a long time, he heard footfalls. He heard them coming around the corner of the shop from the house, footfalls half swallowed by the wind, passing discreetly, without haste, retreating, merging step by step with the huge, incessant background of the wind.

Boaz's muscles tightened all over him. He had the impulse to start up, to fling open the door, shout into the night, "What are you doing? Stop there! Say! What are you doing and where are you going?"

And as before, the curious impotence of the spectator held him motionless. He had not stirred in his chair. And those footfalls, upon which hinged, as it were, that momentous decade of his life, were gone.

There was nothing to listen for now. Yet he continued to listen. Once or twice, half arousing himself, he drew toward him his unfinished work. And then relapsed into immobility.

As has been said, the wind, making little difference to the ears, made all the difference in the world with the sense of feeling and the sense of smell. From the one important direction of the house. That is how it could come about that Boaz Negro could sit, waiting and listening to nothing in the shop and remain ignorant of disaster until

the alarm had gone away and come back again, pounding, shouting, clanging.

"*Fire!*" he heard them bawling in the street. "*Fire! Fire!*"

Only slowly did he understand that the fire was in his own house.

There is nothing stiller in the world than the skeleton of a house in the dawn after a fire. It is as if everything living, positive, violent, had been completely drained in the one flaming act of violence, leaving nothing but negation till the end of time. It is worse than a tomb. A monstrous stillness! Even the footfalls of the searchers cannot disturb it, for they are separate and superficial. In its presence they are almost frivolous.

Half an hour after dawn the searchers found the body, if what was left from that consuming ordeal might be called a body. The discovery came as a shock. It seemed incredible that the occupant of that house, no cripple or invalid but an able man in the prime of youth, should not have awakened and made good his escape. It was the upper floor which had caught; the stairs had stood to the last. It was beyond calculation. Even if he had been asleep!

And he had not been asleep. This second and infinitely more appalling discovery began to be known. Slowly. By a hint, a breath of rumor here; there an allusion, half taken back. The man, whose incinerated body still lay curled in its bed of cinders, had been dressed at the moment of disaster; even to the watch, the cuff buttons, the studs, the very scaripin. Fully clothed to the last detail, precisely as those who had dealings at the bank might have seen Campbell Wood any weekday morning for the past eight months. A man does not sleep with his clothes on. The skull of the man had been broken, as if with a blunt instrument of iron. On the charred lacework of the floor lay the leg of an old andiron with which Boaz Negro and his Angelina had set up housekeeping in that new house.

It needed only Mr. Asa Whitelaw, coming up the street from that gaping "Noah's Ark" at the bank, to round out the scandalous circle of circumstance.

"Where is Manuel?"

Boaz Negro still sat in his shop, impassive, monumental, his thick, hairy arms resting on the arms of his chair. The tools and materials of his work remained scattered about him, as his irresolute gathering of the night before had left them. Into his eyes no change could come. He had lost his house, the visible monument of all those years of "skinning his fingers." It would seem that he had lost his son.



And he had lost something incalculably precious — that hitherto unquenchable exuberance of the man.

"Where is Manuel?"

When he spoke his voice was unaccented and stale, like the voice of a man already dead.

"Yes, where is Manuel?"

He had answered them with their own question.

"When did you last see him?"

Neither he nor they seemed to take note of that profound irony.

"At supper."

"Tell us, Boaz; you knew about this money?"

The cobbler nodded his head.

"And did Manuel?"

He might have taken sanctuary in a legal doubt. How did he know what Manuel knew? Precisely! As before, he nodded his head.

"After supper, Boaz, you were in the shop? But you heard something?"

He went on to tell them what he had heard: the footfalls, below and above, the extraordinary conversation which had broken for a moment the silence of the inner hall. The account was bare, the phrases monosyllabic. He reported only what had been registered on the sensitive tympanums of his ears, to the last whisper of footfalls stealing past the dark wall of the shop. Of all the formless tangle of thoughts, suspicions, interpretations, and the special and personal knowledge given to the blind which moved in his brain, he said nothing.

He shut his lips there. He felt himself on the defensive. Just as he distrusted the higher ramifications of finance (his house had gone down uninsured), so before the rites and processes of that inscrutable creature, the Law, he felt himself menaced by the invisible and the unknown, helpless, oppressed; in an abject sense, skeptical.

"Keep clear of the Law!" they had told him in his youth. The monster his imagination had summoned up then still stood beside him in his age.

Having exhausted his monosyllabic and superficial evidence, they could move him no farther. He became deaf and dumb. He sat before them, an image cast in some immensely heavy stuff, inanimate. His lack of visible emotion impressed them. Remembering his exuberance, it was only the stranger to see him unmoving and unmoved. Only once did they catch sight of something beyond. As they were preparing to leave he opened his mouth. What he said was like

a swan song to the years of his exuberant happiness. Even now there was no color of expression in his words, which sounded mechanical.

"Now I have lost everything. My house. My last son. Even my honor. You would not think I would like to live. But I go to live. I go to work. That *cachorra*, one day he shall come back again, in the dark night, to have a look. I shall go to show you all. That *cachorra!*"

(And from that time on, it was noted, he never referred to the fugitive by any other name than *cachorra*, which is a kind of dog. "That *cachorra!*" As if he had forfeited the relationship not only of the family, but of the very genus, the very race! "That *cachorra!*" )

He pronounced this resolution without passion. When they assured him that the culprit would come back again indeed, much sooner than he expected, "with a rope around his neck," he shook his head slowly.

"No, you shall not catch that *cachorra* now. But one day —"

There was something about its very colorlessness which made it sound oracular. It was at least prophetic. They searched, laid their traps, proceeded with all their placards, descriptions, rewards, clues, trails. But on Manuel Negro they never laid their hands.

Months passed and became years. Boaz Negro did not rebuild his house. He might have done so, out of his earnings, for upon himself he spent scarcely anything, reverting to his old habit of almost miserly economy. Yet perhaps it would have been harder after all. For his earnings were less and less. In that town a cobbler who sits in an empty shop is apt to want for trade. Folk take their boots to mend where they take their bodies to rest and their minds to be edified.

No longer did the walls of Boaz's shop resound to the boastful recollections of young men. Boaz had changed. He had become not only different, but opposite. A metaphor will do best. The spirit of Boaz Negro had been a meadowed hillside giving upon the open sea, the sun, the warm, wild winds from beyond the blue horizon. And covered with flowers, always hungry and thirsty for the sun and the fabulous wind and bright showers of rain. It had become an entrenched camp, lying silent, sullen, verdureless, under a gray sky. He stood solitary against the world. His approaches were closed. He was blind, and he was also deaf and dumb.

Against that what can young fellows do who wish for nothing but to rest themselves and talk about their friends and enemies? They had come and they had tried. They had raised their voices

even higher than before. Their boasts had grown louder, more presumptuous, more preposterous, until, before the cold separation of that unmoving and as if contemptuous presence in the cobbler's chair, they burst of their own air, like toy balloons. And they went and left Boaz alone.

There was another thing which served, if not to keep them away, at least not to entice them back. That was the aspect of the place. It was not cheerful. It invited no one. In its way that fire-bitten ruin grew to be almost as great a scandal as the act itself had been. It was plainly an eyesore. A valuable property, on the town's main thoroughfare — and an eyesore! The neighboring owners protested.

Their protestations might as well have gone against a stone wall. That man was deaf and dumb. He had become, in a way, a kind of vegetable, for the quality of a vegetable is that, while it is endowed with life, it remains fixed in one spot. For years Boaz was scarcely seen to move foot out of that shop that was left him, a small, square, blistered promontory on the shores of ruin.

He must indeed have carried out some rudimentary sort of domestic program under the debris at the rear (he certainly did not sleep or eat in the shop). One or two lower rooms were left fairly intact. The outward aspect of the place was formless; it grew to be no more than a mound in time; the charred timbers, one or two still standing, lean and naked against the sky, lost their blackness and faded to a silvery gray. It would have seemed strange, had they not grown accustomed to the thought, to imagine that blind man, like a mole, or some slow slug, turning himself mysteriously in the bowels of that gray mound — that time-silvered "eyesore."

When they saw him, however, he was in the shop. They opened the door to take in their work (when other cobblers turned them off), and they saw him seated in his chair in the half-darkness, his whole person, legs, torso, neck, head, as motionless as the vegetable of which we have spoken — only his hands and his bare arms endowed with visible life. The gloom had bleached the skin to the color of damp ivory, and against the background of his immobility they moved with a certain amazing monstrousness, interminably. No, they were never still. One wondered what they could be at. Surely he could not have had enough work now to keep those insatiable hands so monstrously in motion. Even far into the night. Tap-tap-tap! Blows continuous and powerful. On what? On nothing? On the bare iron last? And for what purpose? To what conceivable end?

Well, one could imagine those arms, growing paler, also growing thicker and more formidable with that unceasing labor; the muscles feeding themselves, omnivorously on their own waste, the cords toughening, the bone tissues revitalizing themselves without end. One could imagine the whole aspiration of that mute and motionless man pouring itself out into those pallid arms, and the arms taking it up with a kind of blind greed. Storing it up. Against a day!

"That *cachorra*! One day —"

What were the thoughts of this man? What moved within that motionless cranium covered with long hair? Who can say? Behind everything, of course, stood that bitterness against the world — the blind world — blinder than he would ever be. And against "that *cachorra*." But this was no longer a thought; it was the man.

Just as all muscular aspiration flowed into his arms, so all the energies of his senses turned to his ears. The man had become, you might say, two arms and two ears. Can you imagine a man listening, intently, through the waking hours of nine years?

Listening to footfalls. Marking with a special emphasis of concentration the beginning, rise, full passage, falling away, and dying of all footfalls. By day, by night, winter and summer and winter again. Unraveling the skein of footfalls passing up and down the street!

For three years he wondered when they would come. For the next three years he wondered if they would ever come. It was during the last three that a doubt began to trouble him. It gnawed at his huge moral strength. Like a hidden seepage of water, it undermined (in anticipation) his terrible resolution. It was a sign, perhaps of age, a slipping away of the reckless infallibility of youth.

Supposing, after all, that his ears should fail him. Supposing they were capable of being tricked, without his being able to know it. Supposing that that *cachorra* should come and go, and he, Boaz, living in some vast delusion, some unrealized distortion of memory, should let him pass unknown. Supposing precisely this thing had already happened!

Or the other way around. What if he should hear the footfalls coming, even into the very shop itself? What if he should be as sure of them as of his own soul? What, then, if he should strike? And what then, if it were not that *cachorra* after all? How many tens and hundreds of millions of people were there in the world? Was it possible for them all to have footfalls distinct and different?

Then they would take him and hang him. And that *cachorra* might then come and go at his own will, undisturbed.

As he sat there sometimes the sweat rolled down his nose, cold as rain.

Supposing!

Sometimes, quite suddenly, in broad day, in the booming silence of the night, he would start. Not outwardly. But beneath the pale integument of his skin all his muscles tightened and his nerves sang. His breathing stopped. It seemed almost as if his heart stopped.

What was it? Were those the feet, there emerging faintly from the distance? Yes, there was something about them. Yes! Memory was in travail. Yes, yes, yes! No! How could he be sure? Ice ran down into his empty eyes. The footfalls were already passing. They were gone, swallowed up already by time and space. Had that been that *cachorra*?

Nothing in his life had been so hard to meet as this insidious drain of distrust in his own powers; this sense of a traitor within the walls. His iron-gray hair had turned white. It was always this now, from the beginning of the day to the end of the night: how was he to know? How was he to be inevitably, unshakably, sure?

Curiously, after all this purgatory of doubts, he did know them. For a moment at least, when he had heard them, he was sure.

It was on an evening of the winter holidays, the Portuguese festival of *Menin' Jesus*. Christ was born again in a hundred mangers on a hundred tiny altars; there was cake and wine; songs went shouting by to the accompaniment of mandolins and tramping feet. The wind blew cold under a clear sky. In all the houses there were lights; even in Boaz Negro's shop a lamp was lit just now, for a man had been in for a pair of boots which Boaz had patched. The man had gone out again. Boaz was thinking of blowing out the light. It meant nothing to him.

He leaned forward, judging the position of the lamp chimney by the heat on his face, and puffed out his cheeks to blow. Then his cheeks collapsed suddenly, and he sat back again.

It was not odd that he had failed to hear the footfalls until they were actually within the door. A crowd of merrymakers was passing just then; their songs and tramping almost shook the shop.

Boaz sat back. Beneath his passive exterior his nerves thrummed; his muscles had grown as hard as wood. Yes! Yes! But no! He had heard nothing; no more than a single step, a single foot-pressure on the planks within the door. Dear God! He could not tell!

Going through the pain of an enormous effort, he opened his lips. "What can I do for you?"

"Well, I — I don't know. To tell the truth —"

The voice was unfamiliar, but it might be assumed. Boaz held himself. His face remained blank, interrogating, slightly helpless.

"I am a little deaf," he said. "Come nearer."

The footfalls came halfway across the intervening floor, and there appeared to hesitate. The voice, too, had a note of uncertainty.

"I was just looking around. I have a pair of — well, you mend shoes?"

Boaz nodded his head. It was not in response to the words, for they meant nothing. What he had heard was the footfalls on the floor.

Now he was sure. As has been said, for a moment at least after he had heard them he was unshakably sure. The congestion of his muscles had passed. He was at peace.

The voice became audible once more. Before the massive pre-occupation of the blind man it became still less certain of itself.

"Well, I haven't got the shoes with me. I was — just looking around."

It was amazing to Boaz, this miraculous sensation of peace.

"Wait!" Then, bending his head as if listening to the winter wind, "It's cold tonight. You've left the door open. But wait!" Leaning down, his hand fell on a rope's end hanging by the chair. The gesture was one continuous, undeviating movement of the hand. No hesitation. No groping. How many hundreds, how many thousands of times, had his hand schooled itself in that gesture!

A single strong pull. With a little *bang* the front door had swung to and latched itself. Not only the front door. The other door, leading to the rear, had closed, too, and latched itself with a little *bang*. And leaning forward from his chair, Boaz blew out the light.

There was not a sound in the shop. Outside, feet continued to go by, ringing on the frozen road; voices were lifted; the wind hustled about the corners of the wooden shell with a continuous, shrill note of whistling. All of this outside, as on another planet. Within the blackness of the shop the complete silence persisted.

Boaz listened. Sitting on the edge of his chair, half crouching, his head, with its long, unkempt, white hair, bent slightly to one side, he concentrated upon this chambered silence the full power of his senses. He hardly breathed. The other person in that room could not be breathing at all, it seemed.

No, there was not a breath, not the stirring of a sole on wood, not the infinitesimal rustle of any fabric. It was as if, in this utter stop-

page of sound, even the blood had ceased to flow in the veins and arteries of that man, who was like a rat caught in a trap.

It was appalling even to Boaz; even to the cat. Listening became more than a labor. He began to have a fight against a growing impulse to shout out loud, to leap, sprawl forward without aim in that unstirred darkness — do something. Sweat rolled down from behind his ears, into his shirt collar. He gripped the chair arms. To keep quiet he sank his teeth into his lower lip. He would not! He would not!

And of a sudden he heard before him, in the center of the room, an outburst of breath, an outrush from lungs in the extremity of pain, thick, laborious, fearful. A coughing up of dammed air.

Pushing himself from the arms of the chair, Boaz leaped.

His fingers, passing swiftly through the air, closed on something. It was a sheaf of hair, bristly and thick. It was a man's beard.

On the road outside, up and down the street for a hundred yards, merrymaking people turned to look at one another. With an abrupt cessation of laughter, of speech. Inquiringly. Even with an unconscious dilation of the pupils of their eyes.

"What was that?"

There had been a scream. There could be no doubt of that. A single, long-drawn note. Immensely high-pitched. Not as if it were human.

"God's sake! What was that? Where'd it come from?"

Those nearest said it came from the cobbler shop of Boaz Negro.

They went and tried the door. It was closed; even locked, as if for the night. There was no light behind the window shade. But Boaz would not have a light. They beat on the door. No answer.

But from where, then, had that prolonged, as if animal, note come?

They ran about, penetrating into the side lanes, interrogating, prying. Coming back at last, inevitably, to the neighborhood of Boaz Negro's shop.

The body lay on the floor at Boaz's feet, where it had tumbled down slowly after a moment from the spasmodic embrace of his arms; those ivory-colored arms which had beaten so long upon the bare iron surface of the last. Blows continuous and powerful. It seemed incredible. They were so weak now. They could not have lifted the hammer now.

But that beard! That bristly, thick, square beard of a stranger!

His hands remembered it. Standing with his shoulders fallen forward and his weak arms hanging down, Boaz began to shiver. The

whole thing was incredible. What was on the floor there, upheld in the vast gulf of darkness, he could not see. Neither could he hear it; smell it. Nor (if he did not move his foot) could he feel it. What he did not hear, smell, or touch did not exist. It was not there. Incredible!

But that beard! All the accumulated doubtings of those years fell down upon him. After all, the thing he had been so fearful of in his weak imaginings had happened. He had killed a stranger. He, Boaz Negro, had murdered an innocent man!

And all on account of that beard. His deep panic made him light-headed. He began to confuse cause and effect. If it were not for that beard, it would have been that *cachorra*.

On this basis he began to reason with a crazy directness. And to act. He went and pried open the door into the entry. From a shelf he took down his razor. A big, heavy-heeled strop. His hands began to hurry. And the mug, half full of soap. And water. It would have to be cold water. But after all, he thought (lightheadedly), at this time of night —

Outside, they were at the shop again. The crowd's habit is to forget a thing quickly, once it is out of sight and hearing. But there had been something about that solitary cry which continued to bother them, even in memory. Where had it been? Where had it come from? And those who had stood nearest the cobbler shop were heard again. They were certain now, dead certain. They could swear!

In the end they broke down the door.

If Boaz heard them he gave no sign. An absorption as complete as it was monstrous wrapped him. Kneeling in the glare of the lantern they had brought, as impervious as his own shadow sprawling behind him, he continued to shave the dead man on the floor.

No one touched him. Their minds and imaginations were arrested by the gigantic proportions of the act. The unfathomable presumption of the act. As throwing murder in their faces to the tune of a jig in a barbershop. It is a fact that none of them so much as thought of touching him. No less than all of them, together with all other men, shorn of their imaginations — that is to say, the expressionless and imperturbable creature of the Law — would be sufficient to touch that ghastly man.

On the other hand, they could not leave him alone. They could not go away. They watched. They saw the damp, lather-soaked beard of that victimized stranger falling away, stroke by stroke of the flashing, heavy razor. The dead denuded by the blind!



It was seen that Boaz was about to speak. It was something important he was about to utter; something, one would say, fatal. The words would not come all at once. They swelled his cheeks out. His razor was arrested. Lifting his face, he encircled the watchers with a gaze at once of imploration and of command. As if he could see them. As if he could read his answer in the expressions of their faces.

"Tell me one thing now. Is it that *cachorra*?"

For the first time those men in the room made sounds. They shuffled their feet. It was as if an uncontrollable impulse to ejaculation, laughter, derision, forbidden by the presence of death, had gone down into their boot soles.

"Manuel?" one of them said. "You mean *Manuel*?"

Boaz laid the razor down on the floor beside its work. He got up from his knees slowly, as if his joints hurt. He sat down in his chair, rested his hands on the arms, and once more encircled the company with his sightless gaze.

"Not Manuel. Manuel was a good boy. But tell me now, is it that *cachorra*?"

Here was something out of their calculations; something for them, mentally, to chew on. Mystification is a good thing sometimes. It gives to the brain a fillip, stirs memory, puts the gears of imagination in mesh. One man, an old, tobacco-chewing fellow, began to stare harder at the face on the floor. Something moved in his intellect.

"No, but look here now, by God —"

He had even stopped chewing. But he was forestalled by another.

"Say now, if it don't look like that fellow Wood, himself. The bank fellow — that was burned — remember? Himself."

"That *cachorra* was not burned. Not that Wood. You darned fool!"

Boaz spoke from his chair. They hardly knew his voice, emerging from its long silence: it was so didactic and arid.

"That *cachorra* was not burned! It was my boy that was burned. It was that *cachorra* called my boy upstairs. That *cachorra* killed my boy. That *cachorra* put his clothes on my boy, and he set my house on fire. I knew that all the time. Because when I heard those feet come out of my house and go away, I knew they were the feet of that *cachorra* from the bank. I did not know where he was going to. Something said to me — you better ask him where he is going to. But then I said, you are foolish. He had the money from the bank. I did not know. And then my house was on fire. No, it was not my boy

that went away; it was that *cachorra* all the time. You darned fools! Did you think I was waiting for my own boy? "

"Now I show you all," he said at the end. "And now I can get hanged."

No one ever touched Boaz Negro for that murder. For murder it was in the eye and letter of the Law. The Law in a small town is sometimes a curious creature; it is sometimes blind only in one eye.

Their minds and imaginations in that town were arrested by the romantic proportions of the act. Simply, no one took it up. I believe the man, Wood, was understood to have died of heart failure.

When they asked Boaz why he had not told what he knew as to the identity of that fugitive in the night, he seemed to find it hard to say exactly. How could a man of no education define for them his own but half-defined misgivings about the Law, his sense of oppression, constraint, and awe, of being on the defensive, even, in an abject way, his skepticism? About his wanting, come what might, to "keep clear of the Law"?

He did say this, "You would have laughed at me."

And this, "If I told folks it was Wood went away, then I say he would not dare come back again."

That was the last. Very shortly he began to refuse to talk about the thing at all. The act was completed. Like the creature of fable, it had consumed itself. Out of that old man's consciousness it had departed. Amazingly. Like a dream dreamed out.

Slowly at first, in a makeshift, piece-at-a-time, poor man's way, Boaz commenced to rebuild his house. That "eyesore" vanished.

And slowly at first, like the miracle of a green shoot pressing out from the dead earth, that priceless and unquenchable exuberance of the man was seen returning. Unquenchable, after all.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. If the ending surprised you, you have nobody but yourself to blame; for Mr. Steele has played the game fairly. Consider how absolutely wrong, after all, would have been the ending you expected. Read the story again and see how emphatically you were told that Wood was a villain and that he was preparing a trap.

2. What particular incident reminded you of Poe? Do you think it is more horrible than most of the passages in Poe? Comment.

3. Have any other characters in these stories been as real to you as Boaz Negro? If so, what ones?

4. In what way is Steele like Hawthorne?

5. Note how short, direct, and abrupt are most of the sentences and paragraphs in this story. What short-story writer in this book provides the greatest contrast to these features of Steele's journalistic style?

6. Would you like to dramatize this story?

7. Vocabulary: moribund, weirs, stentorian, ruthless, duenna, canny, fillip, paradoxical, infinitesimal, perambulation.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

8. You may wonder why Boaz did nothing while Wood was engaged in murder and arson. Twice Steele explains that "the curious *impotence* of the spectator" held him motionless (pages 165, 166). You probably know that *potent* means powerful, as a drug or an argument is *potent*. *Impotent*, then, means powerless, and *impotence* is a state of being incapable of effective action. You will find on page 437 *omnipotence*, combining this same root with a prefix meaning all, to name a state of being all-powerful. *Potential* means having powers not in use. A *potentially* great man may fail to achieve greatness.

## PEARL S. BUCK (1892- )

In some happier future time, when the Chinese people have taken their rightful place in the culture of the world and the family of nations, Pearl Buck will be remembered for *The Good Earth*, "a book which made us feel of the Chinese peasant that all men are brothers." But Pearl Buck's fame has not had to wait upon time. Attaining the best-seller lists at once, *The Good Earth* remained there for twenty-one months, won the Pulitzer Prize for 1932, was translated into about twenty languages, and as a movie went around the world. It was probably also the decisive reason for the 1938 award of the Nobel Prize for literature to Pearl Buck, which surprised the author and deeply gratified her readers.

Pearl Buck's work is a fine example of the principle that an author should write about what he knows. Boasting a pre-Revolutionary American ancestry, she was born of American missionaries to China; grew up in China, where she talked Chinese before learning English; came back to go to college in Virginia; and in China taught in Nanking universities for ten years. She now lives in Pennsylvania with her husband, Richard Walsh, and several adopted children. Her writing career began in earnest in 1929. Her best novels are in the trilogy called *House of Earth: The Good Earth, Sons, and A House Divided*. The experiences of her own parents furnish the mate-

rial for two fine biographies, *Fighting Angel* and *The Exile*. She has also written some fine short stories, and many serious articles on social and artistic problems. Her contribution to American knowledge of the Chinese includes a translation of a Chinese folk novel, *All Men Are Brothers* (1933). Her work is marked by complete sincerity and a style of Biblical flavor. In her fiction East at last meets West on a common ground of sympathy and understanding.

## THE FRILL

Here, in the story of a five-dollar dress, we get an epitome of the world's injustice. On the surface "The Frill" seems quiet enough; but underneath there seethes a fierce indignation. Pearl Buck's treatment of the Chinese tailor shows her remarkable humanity, but for the abominable Mrs. Lowe she has only a towering scorn. So sharply does she set the strong against the weak, the ruthless against the compassionate, the stupid against the imaginative, that before you finish you will feel your own sympathies quickened, your vision enlarged.

"MY DEAR, the only way to manage these native tailors is to be *firm!*"

Mrs. Lowe, the postmaster's wife, settled herself with some difficulty into the wicker rocking chair upon the wide veranda of her house. She was a large woman, red-faced from more food than necessary and little exercise over the ten-odd years she had spent in a port town on the China coast, and now as she looked at her caller and thus spoke, her square, hard-fleshed face grew a little redder. Beside her stood a Chinese manservant, who had just announced in a mild voice:

"Tailor have come, missy."

Little Mrs. Newman looked at her hostess with vague admiration.

"I'm sure I wish I had your way with them, Adeline," she murmured, fanning herself slowly with a palm-leaf fan that she had taken from a small wicker table at her elbow. She went on in a plaintive, complaining way, "Sometimes I think it is scarcely worth while to bother with new clothes, although they are so cheap here, especially if you buy the native silks. But it is so much trouble to have them made, and these tailors say — my dear, my tailor promises me faithfully he will make a dress in three days and then he doesn't come for a week or two! Robert says I look disgraceful and that my clothes aren't fit for a rummage sale, but I tell him if he only knew the trouble it is to get a native tailor to do anything and then the weird way

they cut the sleeves — Oh, dear! ” Her weak voice dwindled and ended in a sigh, and she fanned herself a trifle more quickly for a second or two and wiped the perspiration from her upper lip with her handkerchief.

“ Watch me, now,” said Mrs. Lowe commandingly. She had a deep, firm voice and round, hard, gray eyes set a little near together beneath closely waved, dead brown hair. She turned these eyes upon the Chinese manservant as he stood looking down decorously at the floor, his head drooping slightly, and said, “ Boy, talkee tailor come this side! ”

“ Yes, missy,” murmured the servant, and disappeared.

Almost instantly there was the sound of soft, steady footsteps through the open doors, and from the back of the house through the hall there came following the manservant the tailor. He was a tall man, taller than the servant, middle-aged, his face quiet with a sort of closed tranquillity. He wore a long robe of faded blue grass cloth, patched neatly at the elbows and very clean. Under his arm he carried a bundle wrapped in a white cloth. He bowed to the two white women and then, squatting down, put this bundle upon the floor of the veranda and untied its knots. Inside was a worn and frayed fashion book from some American company and a half-finished dress of a spotted blue and white silk. This dress he shook out carefully and held up for Mrs. Lowe to see. From its generous proportions it could be seen that it was made for her. She surveyed it coldly and with hostility, searching its details.

Suddenly she spoke in a loud voice. “ No wantchee that collar, tailor! I have talkee you wantchee frill — see, so fashion! ” She turned the pages of the book rapidly to a section devoted to garments for ample women. “ See, all same fashion this lady. What for you makee flat collar? No wantchee — no wantchee — take it away! ”

Upon the tailor's calm, patient face a perspiration broke forth. “ Yes, missy,” he said faintly. And then he pressed his lips together slightly and took a breath and began, “ Missy, you first talkee frill, then you say no frill. Other day you say wantchee flat collar, frill too fat.”

He looked imploringly at the white woman. But Mrs. Lowe waved him away with a fat, ringed hand and began to rock back and forth vigorously in her wicker chair. She raised her voice.

“ No, you talkee lie, tailor,” she cried sternly. “ I know how I talkee. I never say I wantchee flat collar — never! No lady have flat collar now. What for you talkee so fashion? ”

"Yes, missy," said the tailor. Then, brightening somewhat, he suggested, "Have more cloth, missy. Suppose I makee frill, never mind."

But Mrs. Lowe was not to be thus easily appeased. "Yes, never mind you, but you have spoil so much my cloth. What you think, I buy this cloth no money? Plenty money you make me lose." She rocked back and forth and fanned herself vigorously, her cheeks a dark purple. She turned to her guest. "I have been counting on that dress, Minnie, and now look at it! I wanted to wear it to the garden party at the consulate day after tomorrow. I told him a frill — just look at that silly collar!"

"Yes, I know. It's just what I was saying," said Mrs. Newman in her tired, peevish voice. "What I want to know is how will you manage it?"

"Oh, I'll manage it," replied Mrs. Lowe grimly.

She ignored the tailor for a while and stared out over her trim garden. In the hot sunshine a blue-coated coolie squatted over a border of zinnias, glittering in the September noon. A narrow, sanded path ran about a square of green lawn. She said nothing; and the tailor stood acutely uncomfortable, the dress still held delicately by the shoulders. A small trickle of perspiration ran down each side of his face. He wet his lips and began in a trembling voice:

"Missy wantchee try?"

"No, I do not," snapped Mrs. Lowe. "What for wantchee try? All wrong — collar all wrong — what for try?" She continued to stare out into the shining garden.

"Can makee all same frill," said the tailor eagerly, persuasively. "Yes, yes, missy, I makee all same you say. What time you want?"

"I want it tomorrow," replied the white woman in a loud, hard voice. "You bring tomorrow twelve o'clock. Suppose you no bring, then I no pay — savee? All time you talkee what time you bring and you never bring."

"Can do, missy," said the tailor quietly. He had begun now to fold the dress rapidly and neatly, his thin hands moving with a sure delicacy. "I know, missy. I bring tomorrow, frill all finish, everything finish, very nice."

He squatted gracefully, folded the dress into the cloth again and tied it tenderly, careful to crush nothing. Then he rose and stood waiting, upon his face some agony of supplication. His whole soul rose in this silent supplication, so that it was written upon his quiet, high-cheeked face, upon his close-set lips. Sweat broke out upon him

afresh. Even Mrs. Lowe could feel dimly that imploring soul. She paused in her rocking and looked up.

"What is it?" she asked sharply. "What more thing?"

The tailor wet his lips again and spoke in a faint voice, scarcely a whisper. "Missy, can you give me litty money — one dollar, two dollar?" Before her outraged look his voice dropped yet lower. "My brother's son he die today, I think. He have three piecee baby, one woman — no money buy coffin — no nothing — he very ill to-day —"

Mrs. Lowe looked at her caller. "Well, of all the nerve!" she breathed, genuinely aghast.

Mrs. Newman answered her look. "It's just what I said," she replied. "They are more trouble than they are worth — and the way they *cut* — and then they think about nothing but money!"

Mrs. Lowe turned her rolling gray eyes upon the tailor. He did not look up, but he wiped his lips furtively with his sleeve. She stared at him an instant and then her voice came forth filled with righteous anger. "No," she said. "No. You finish dress all proper with frill, I pay you. No finish dress, no pay. Never. You savee, tailor."

"Yes, missy," sighed the tailor. All vestige of hope had now disappeared from his face. The atmosphere of supplication died away. A look of cold despair came over his face like a curtain. "I finish tomorrow twelve o'clock, missy," he said, and turned away.

"See that you do," shouted Mrs. Lowe triumphantly after him, and she watched his figure with contempt as it disappeared into the hall. Then she turned to her caller. "If I say tomorrow," she explained, "perhaps it will be ready by the day after." She thought of something and, reaching forward in her chair, pressed a bell firmly. The servant appeared. "Boy," she said, "look see tailor — see he no takee something."

Her loud voice penetrated into the house and the tailor's body, still visible at the end of the hall, straightened itself somewhat and then passed out of sight.

"You never can tell," said Mrs. Lowe. "You can't tell whether they are making up these stories or not. If they need money — but they always do need money. I never saw such people. They must make a lot, though, sewing for all these foreigners here in the port. But this tailor is worse than most. He is forever wanting money before his work is done. Three separate times he has come and said a child was dying or something. I don't believe a word of it. Probably

smokes opium or gambles. They all gamble — you can't believe a word they say! ”

“ Oh, I know — ” sighed Mrs. Newman, rising to depart.

Mrs. Lowe rose also. “ After all, one simply has to be *firm*,” she said again.

Outside the big, white, foreign house the tailor went silently and swiftly through the hot street. Well, he had asked her and she would not give him anything. After all his dread and fear of her refusal, all his summoning of courage, she would not give him anything. The dress was more than half done, except for the frill, too. She had given him the silk two days ago, and he had been glad because it would bring him in a few dollars for this nephew of his, who was like his own son, now that the gods had taken away his own little children, three of them. Yes, one by one he had seen his little children die, and he had not one left.

He had, therefore, clung the more to this only son of his dead younger brother, a young man apprenticed to an ironsmith, and he had three little children now too. Such a strong young man — who could have thought he would have been seized for death like this? Two months ago it was that the long piece of red-hot iron he was beating into the shape of a plowshare had slipped somehow from his pincers and had fallen upon his leg and foot and seared the flesh away almost to the bone. It had fallen on his naked flesh, for it was summer and the little shop was hot, and he had on only his thin cotton trousers rolled to his thighs.

Well, and they had tried every sort of ointment, but what ointment will grow sound flesh again, and what balm is there for such a wound? It was summer, too, when flies are everywhere, and how much more do they gather about a festering open sore! The whole leg had swollen, and now on this hot day in the ninth moon the young man lay dying. There were black plasters on his leg from hip to foot, but they were of no avail.

Yes, the tailor had seen that for himself this morning when he went to see his nephew — he had seen death there plainly. The young wife sat weeping in the doorway of the one room that was their home; and the two elder children stared at her gravely, too stricken for play. The third was but a babe she held in her bosom. But this last day or two her milk was scanty and poisoned with her grief, and the child vomited it and wept with inner discomfort.

The tailor turned down an alleyway and into a door in a wall. He



passed through a court filled with naked children screaming and quarreling and shouting at play. Above his head were stretched bamboo poles upon which were hung ragged garments washed in too scanty water and without any soap. Here about these courts a family lived in every room, and poured its waste into the court; so that even though it was a dry day and the days had been dry for a moon or more, yet the court was slimy and running with waste water. A strong, acrid smell filled the air.

But he did not notice this. He passed through three more courts like the first and turned to an open door at the right and went into the dark, windowless room. There was a different odor here. It was the odor of dying, rotten flesh. The sound of a woman's wailing rose from beside the curtained bed; and thither the tailor went, his face not changed from the look it had borne away from the white woman's house. The young wife did not look up at his coming. She sat crouched on the ground beside the bed, and her face was wet with tears. Her long black hair had come uncoiled and stretched over her shoulder and hung to the earth. Over and over she moaned:

"Oh, my husband — Oh, my man — I am left alone — Oh, my husband —"

The babe lay on the ground beside her crying feebly now and again. The two elder children sat close to their mother, each of them holding fast to a corner of her coat. They had been weeping too; but now they were silent, their streaked faces upturned to look at their uncle.

But the tailor paid no heed to them now. He looked into the hempen curtains of the bed and said gently:

"Are you still living, my son?"

The dying man turned his eyes with difficulty. He was horribly swollen, his hands, his naked upper body, his neck, his face. But these were nothing to the immense, loglike swelling of his burned leg. It lay there so huge it seemed he was attached to it, rather than it to him. His glazed eyes fixed themselves upon his uncle. He opened his puffed lips, and after a long time and a mighty effort of concentration his voice came forth in a hoarse whisper:

"These children —"

The tailor's face was suddenly convulsed with suffering. He sat down upon the edge of the bed and began to speak earnestly:

"You need not grieve for your children, my son. Die peacefully. Your wife and your children shall come to my house. They shall take the place of my own three. Your wife shall be daughter to me and to

my wife, and your children shall be our grandchildren. Are you not my own brother's son? And he dead, too, and only I left, now! "

He began to weep quietly, and it could be seen that the lines upon his face were set there by other hours of this repressed, silent weeping; for as he wept his face hardly changed at all, only the tears rolled down his cheeks.

After a long time the dying man's voice came again with the same rending effort, as though he tore himself out of some heavy stupor to say what must be said:

" You — are poor — too — "

But the uncle answered quickly, bending toward the dying man, for the swollen eyes were now closed and he could not be sure he was heard. " You're not to worry. Rest your heart. I have work — these white women are always wanting new dresses. I have a silk dress now nearly finished for the postmaster's wife — nearly done, except for a frill, and then she will give me money for it, and perhaps more sewing. We shall do very well — "

But the young man made no further reply. He had gone into that stupor forever, and he could rouse himself no more.

Nevertheless, he still breathed slightly throughout that long hot day. The tailor rose once to place his bundle in a corner and to remove his robe, and then he took his place again beside the dying man and remained immovable through the hours. The woman wailed on and on; but at last she was exhausted and sat leaning against the end of the bed, her eyes closed, sobbing now and again softly. But the children grew used to it. They grew used even to their father's dying, and they ran out into the court to play. Once or twice a kindly neighbor woman came and put her head in at the door; and the last time she picked up the babe and carried him away, holding him to her own full breast to comfort him. Outside, her voice could be heard shouting in cheerful pity:

" Well, his hour is come; and he is foul already as though he had been dead a month! "

So the hot day drew on at last to its end, and when twilight came the young man ceased breathing and was dead.

Only then did the tailor rise. He rose and put on his gown and took his bundle and he said to the crouching woman:

" He is dead. Have you any money at all? "

Then the young woman rose also and looked at him anxiously, smoothing the hair back from her face. It could now be seen that she was still very young, not more than twenty years of age, a young,

common creature such as may be seen anywhere on any street in any day, neither pretty nor ugly, slight, and somewhat slovenly even on ordinary occasions and now unwashed for many days. Her grimy face was round, the mouth full and projecting, the eyes a little stupid. It was clear that she had lived from day to day, never foreseeing the catastrophe that had now befallen her. She looked at the tailor humbly and anxiously.

"We have nothing left," she said. "I pawned his clothes and my winter clothes and the table and stools, and we have only that bed on which he lies."

The look of despair deepened on the man's face. "Is there anyone of whom you might borrow?" he asked.

She shook her head. "I do not know anyone except these people in the court. And what have they?" Then, as the full terror of her position came upon her, she cried out shrilly, "Uncle, we have no one but you in the world!"

"I know," he said simply. He looked once more at the bed. "Cover him," he said in a low voice. "Cover him against the flies."

He passed through the courts quickly then; and the neighbor woman, who was still holding the babe, bawled at him as he went, "Is he dead yet?"

"He is dead," said the tailor, and went through the gate into the street and turned to the west where his own home was.

It seemed to him that this was the most hot day of that whole summer. So is the ninth moon hot, sometimes, and so does summer often pass burning fiercely into autumn. The evening had brought no coolness, and thunderous clouds towered over the city. The streets were filled with half-naked men and with women in thinnest garb, sitting upon little low bamboo couches they had moved out of their houses. Some lay flat upon the street on mats of reed or strips of woven matting. Children wailed everywhere and mothers fanned their babes wearily, dreading the night.

Through this crowd the tailor passed swiftly, his head bent down. He was now very weary, but still not hungry, although he had fasted the whole day. He could not eat — no, not even when he reached the one room in a court which was his home — and he could not eat even when his poor, stupid, old wife, who could not keep her babies alive, came shuffling and panting out of the street and placed a bowl of cold rice gruel on the table for him to eat. There was that smell about his clothes — it filled his nostrils still. He thought suddenly of the silk dress. Suppose the white woman noticed the odor there! He rose

suddenly and opened the bundle and shook out the dress and, turning it carefully inside out, he hung it to air upon a decrepit dressmaker's form that stood by the bed.

But it could not hang there long. He must finish it and have the money. He took off his robe and his undershirt and his shoes and stockings and sat in his trousers. He must be careful in this heat that his sweat did not stain the dress. He found a gray towel and wrapped it about his head to catch the drops of sweat and put a rag upon the table on which to wipe his hands from time to time.

While he sewed swiftly, holding the silk very delicately in his thin fingers, not daring to hasten beyond what he was able to do well, either, lest she be not pleased, he pondered on what he could do. He had had an apprentice last year; but the times were so evil he had let the lad go, and so had now but his own ten fingers to use. But that was not altogether ill, either, because the lad had made so many mistakes and the white woman said so insistently, "You must makee yourself, tailor — no give small boy makee spoil —" Yes, but with just these ten fingers of his could he hope to make another dress in three days? Suppose she had another silk dress — that would be ten dollars for the two. He could buy a coffin for ten dollars down and the promise of more later.

But supposing she had no more work to give him now — then what could he do? What, indeed, but go to a usurer. And yet that he did not dare to do. A man was lost if he went to a usurer; for the interest ran faster than a tiger upon him, double and triple in a few months what he had borrowed. Then when the coffin was buried he must bring the young wife and the three babies here. There was only this one room for them all, too. His heart warmed somewhat at the thought of the babies, and then stopped in terror at the thought that he must feed them.

He must find more work to do. Yes, there would be more work, doubtless. Surely the postmaster's wife would have more, another silk dress tomorrow for him, doubtless. She was so rich, living there in that big foreign house, set in a flower garden.

Midnight drew on and he was not finished. The worst of all was yet to be made — the frill. He fetched his fashion book and pored over it beneath the flickering light of the small tin kerosene lamp. So the frill went, here it turned, a long, wide frill, closely pleated. He folded the small pleats, his hands trembling with fatigue. His wife lay snoring in the bed now. Nothing would wake her, not even the rackety, noisy sewing machine with which he set fast the carefully

basted frill. At dawn there remained but the edge to whip by hand and the irons to heat on the charcoal brazier. Well, he would sleep a little and rest his aching eyes, and then get up to finish it. He hung the dress upon the form, and then he lay down beside his wife and fell instantly into deep sleep.

But not for long could he sleep. At seven he rose and went to his work again and worked until nearly noon, stopping only for a mouthful of the food he could not eat the night before. Then he was finished. It had taken him longer than he hoped it would. He squinted up at the sun. Yes, he could just get to the house by noon. He must hasten. He must not make her angry so that she would perhaps refuse him the other dress because for the moment she was angry. No, somehow he must have the other dress. Then if he sewed this afternoon and tonight he could finish it in another day. He smelled the finished dress anxiously. A little odor, perhaps — would she notice it?

But fortunately she did not notice it. She was sitting in that strange, moving chair she had on the veranda, and she looked at the dress critically.

"All finish?" she asked in her loud, sudden way.

"Yes, missy," he answered humbly.

"All right, I go try."

She had gone into her room then; and he held his breath, waiting. Perhaps there was some odor to it yet? But she came back wearing the dress, a satisfied look upon her face; but not too satisfied.

"How much?" she said abruptly.

He hesitated. "Five dollar, missy, please." Then, seeing her angry eyes, he added hastily, "Silk dress, five dollar, please, missy. Any tailor five dollars."

"Too much — too much," she declared. "You spoil my cloth, too!" But she paid the money to him grudgingly; and he took it from her, delicately careful not to touch her hand.

"Thank you, missy," he said gently.

He dropped to his heels and began to tie up his bundle, his fingers trembling. He must ask her now. But how could he? What would he do if she refused? He gathered his courage together desperately.

"Missy," he said, looking up humbly, but avoiding her eyes, "you have more dress I can do?"

He waited, hanging on her answer, staring into the shining garden. But she had already turned to go into the house again to take off the dress. She called back at him carelessly:

"No — no more! You makee too muchee trouble. You spoil my cloth — plenty more tailor more cheap and not so muchee trouble! "

The next day at the garden party she met little Mrs. Newman, sitting languidly in a wicker chair, watching white figures move about the lawn intent upon a game of croquet. Mrs. Newman's faded blue eyes brightened somewhat at the sight of the new dress.

"You really did get your dress after all," she said with faint interest, "I didn't think you really would. He did that frill nicely, didn't he? "

Mrs. Lowe looked down upon her large bosom. There the frill lay, beautifully pleated, perfectly ironed. She said with satisfaction, "Yes, it is nice, isn't it? I am glad I decided to have the frill, after all. And so cheap! My dear, with all this frill the dress cost only five dollars to be made — that's less than two dollars at home! What's that? Oh, yes, he brought it punctually at twelve, as I told him he must. It's as I said — you simply have to be firm with these native tailors! "

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Explain the ironic significance of the title.
2. Did you take sides in the quarrel as to whether Mrs. Lowe had ordered a flat collar or a frill? Find conclusive evidence that she lied to the tailor.
3. Why did Mrs. Lowe doubt the excuses offered by the tailor for requesting an advance of money? Try to analyze without prejudice her complaints against the tailor. Why did Mrs. Lowe talk broken English to the tailor? Is her lack of sympathy due to ignorance, or to a defect of character?
4. Contrast the conditions of the tailor's life with yours. Where in America do we have such poverty as that of the tailor and his people?
5. To what extent is Mrs. Lowe's treatment of the tailor parallel to the treatment of China by the other world powers?
6. How many words did you fail to understand? Is the simplicity of the language an element of weakness or of strength?

#### *For Ambitious Students*

7. You might enjoy constructing a story which presents two conflicting points of view toward the same incident, character, or object; for example, a teacher and a student regarding a disturbance in the hall, or a housewife and a salesman regarding a magazine offer.

## RUTH SUCKOW (1892- )

Ruth Suckow learned about Iowa by moving from town to town with her father, who was a Congregational minister. Her stories are like the now famous paintings of Grant Wood, pictures of the everyday Iowa scene painted with a sympathy that dignifies the commonplace. A scrupulous and faithful realist, she builds up detail after detail with rare precision. Though she avoids the physically revolting details that are found in some of our modern writers, she often conveys a certain impression of drabness. But her chief concern as a true realist is with people — plain, ordinary people — with their good points and their faults and their humanness, all presented with wonderful insight. Her novel, *The Folks* (1934), extending to a larger canvas the life pictured in her short sketches, had great vogue.

## MIDWESTERN PRIMITIVE

This is a study in contrast — between poor Bert Statzer, who was trying so hard to impress people, and her mother, who never tried to be anything but her own plain, wholesome self. There is little satire in this story; the people seem perfectly real, and the quiet, homely little incident is told with great understanding and sympathy.

BERT WENT flying over to get May Douglas to come to look at her table. It was all ready now, and she had to show it to someone. There was nobody at home who knew or cared about such things.

"May! Busy? Want to come and see the table now I've got it fixed?"

"Oh, yes!"

May was delighted. She left her ironing where it was and followed Bert with eager excitement. She thought that Bert Statzer was a wonder.

"We'll go right through the kitchen. Smells kind of good, don't it? There! Do you like it?"

"Bert!"

May was fairly speechless. She gazed at the table with fervent, faded eyes. It seemed to her the most beautiful thing she had ever seen. She didn't see how Bert had managed it — how she ever thought of such things and how she learned to do them. Bert was just a genius, that was all.

"You really think it looks nice?"

Bert drank in May's appreciation thirstily. She knew it didn't

amount to much, that May would admire anything she did; but she had to get appreciation from somewhere.

"I think it's just too beautiful for words. You little marvel! I just don't see how you do it." May sighed.

"Well, I'm glad you think it looks nice." Bert relaxed, with a long, gratified sigh, but stiffened again to say to Maynard, who had tagged them into the dining room, "Be careful, Maynard! If you move one of those things —"

May was looking at everything: the little fringed napkins of pink crepe, the tinted glass goblets which Bert had sent away for, the spray of sweet peas at every place, one pink and then the next one lavender, made of tissue paper — such a pretty idea! She had never seen any napkins like those. Bert went on talking excitedly.

"Well, if it's good enough for those folks, it'll be good enough for anyone. I'll think I've accomplished something, May!"

"I don't see how it can help —"

"Oh, but I've never had anyone like them here — anyone really from away! It scares me. This looks nice to us, but these people have all seen things. Then, you know, they're going to have that famous writer with them. That's what I'm so excited about. If he likes it, then I thought maybe I could use his name. You know that'll help to get me known — if I can get his recommendation. Like those cold-cream ads and everything — they're all doing that. Oh, I'm so excited, May! Feel my hands. Aren't they cold?"

"Why, you poor child!" May took Bert's tense, thin little hands and fondled them. "You don't need to feel that way. I don't see how anybody could ask for anything nicer. If *this* isn't good enough for them —"

"Oh, I know, but people like that who have been places and seen things — Just the kind I've wanted to have come. I don't expect anybody *here* to appreciate this — anybody but you and Mrs. Elliott. Well, I don't care, I've done the best I could. Maynard, look out!"

Bert's face was still gratified but screwed with worry. She knew how she really wanted things to look. She wanted flowered curtains instead of these old ones, and little painted tables instead of this big old thing. . . . Here was this little stuck-in-the-mud burg always holding her back, and her mother, and Arlie. Well, *she* didn't intend to be stuck in the mud, anyway. She had put up her sign where tourists could see it: "Hillside Inn." It made people in town laugh. They wanted to know where the "Hillside" was. She didn't care. People like these could appreciate. Her tearoom, if the dinner to-



day was a success, would attract others; "interesting people" would come — the kind of people she craved to know and among whom she really belonged — and finally she would make so much money that she could get them all out of Shell Spring, herself and Maynard and Arlie, and really go somewhere.

She burst out, "The only trouble is mother!" And that was true. Arlie would stay out — he didn't want folks like that to see him in his old working clothes — but mother thought she had to go in and entertain them, just the way she did with anyone who came to the house. "I was so ashamed when those last people were here. The way mother came in — Now, of course, May, I know mother's good as gold, and means it the best in the world, but what do folks like that think of her? I can't get her to fix herself up or anything. She doesn't understand. 'Ach, well, if they don't like the way I look, then they can look at something they do like.' That's the way she is. She doesn't know one person from another, doesn't see why these people are any different from any others. (May kept making distressed little murmurs. She did know how Mrs. Hohenschuh was!) Now, May, I went and bought a nice up-to-date dress for her, like people are wearing, when I was in Dubuque last. She'd look nice in it if she'd wear it. But do you think she will? No, sir. 'Ach, I never wore anything like that, I'll stick to what I been wearing.' You don't know, May" — Bert's voice tightened into bitterness — "nobody does; they all talk about how good-natured mother is. They don't know how stubborn she can be. Honestly, if mother didn't want to move, I don't believe a *motorcycle* running into her could budge her one inch. She's just hopeless."

"Oh, well, Bert, it'll come out," May said soothingly.

"I suppose. But she gives these people who come here the wrong idea. I don't want them to think we're all like she is."

"They won't think that about you!"

Bert felt encouraged after May's visit. She was excited, flying around the kitchen, doing the last few things, watching out for Maynard so that he would keep his little suit clean. Where was mother? she thought in exasperation. Oh, there! out in the garden, *digging*. Bert had no time to run out after her now. She snatched a look at the clock. Almost time for them to get here! Oh, dear, but she did want everything just right. What was mother thinking of? Did she want to get caught looking like that? "Maynard, if you don't keep away from that table —" Bert thought she would go crazy.

Then mother came waddling serenely into the house.

"Want I should help?"

"Not at this late date!"

That was all Bert was going to say. But she couldn't hold in; even if it was more of a triumph to be simply cold and cutting, she had to let it all out.

"Here I am working, trying to get everything nice, with everything all fixed, and you don't care. You just go on with your old digging out there in the garden and don't see or care!"

Mrs. Hohenschuh looked abashed. "Ach, well," she began; then she retorted, "Well, I ain't wanted around here. You wouldn't be satisfied anyway with things the way I'd do them. Ach, all this fuss! What are you making all this fuss about? All this business!"

She finished with an angry mutter and waddled off to the door. Bert didn't know whether she was going to change her dress or not. Well, if she wanted them to catch her looking that way, if she didn't care, didn't know any better . . . Bert was left trembling with anger. She flew about the kitchen, put a few more nuts on each plate of salad, with shaking fingers changed her old apron for the bright green smock she was going to wear to do the serving — it was what they were wearing; it was like the one she'd seen in the photograph of "Betty Lee's Tearoom" in the cooking magazine.

She went into the dining room. The shining glasses twinkled up at her; the sweet peas were rosy and stiff; the dishes looked so nice; the little napkins were so pretty . . . was everything right? She had got ideas wherever she could, but was she sure? She wanted to show these people that even if she did live out here in Shell Spring, she knew how things ought to be. She was going to have a *real* tearoom someday. She had never felt that she belonged in Shell Spring, among the people who lived there. If she could only have the kind of things that other people had, do things the way that other people did them! She was going to do it even if she was stuck here. It had to be right. Everything was so lovely. Her anger and fear changed into a shining glory. The whole table dazzled before her eyes. She caught hold of Maynard, who was tagging her. "Look, Maynard!" she cried. "Isn't our table pretty?" She snatched a kiss from him in her trembling happiness.

Then she heard a car outside on the road. Her heart gave a wild leap. The people were coming!

A large green car rolled up to the cement block that still stood in the thick green grass beside the road as a relic of horse and buggy days. Bert in her green smock was waiting. Her black eyes were

shining under short black hair threaded with early white. It seemed to her that it took the people a long while to get out of the car. She had time to wonder and to agonize over the place; the old frame house — she wished they could have had it stuccoed — what would these people think? Then the people were out and coming up the walk, and she had a confused, eager sight of two men and three women — one of them was the writer!

One man was in advance, a large man with a rosy face and shell-rimmed glasses. He came toward her smiling. That must be the one who had ordered the dinner, Mrs. Elliott's friend, Mr. Drayton.

"Mrs. Statzer?" Yes, that was who he was. "We heard you gave such good meals here that we thought we'd have to stop and try one of them."

Bert was so pleased and flattered that she scarcely heard his introductions, forgot the names just as soon as he mentioned them. She had been trying from the first to pick out the writer. It was the tall man, then, with the thick gray hair. She hadn't expected him to look . . . like that, somehow — grand, or at least in artistic-looking clothes, a hat with a wide brim, or glasses on a cord, or something. She wanted to show him that she knew who he was, even if most of the people here in town didn't. They hadn't known whom she meant when she said Harry Whetstone was coming here. Well, she hadn't known, either, until Mrs. Elliott told her — but she did now. She held out her hand, alert and eager.

"Oh, this is the writer, is it? I certainly was honored when I heard we were going to entertain you. I haven't read any of your works yet, but I intend to — I don't get much time for reading."

"No hurry, no hurry," the writer said with affable nonchalance.

She was looking, too, at the women. She hadn't got the relationships between the women and men figured out yet. One looked older, one wore that smart little green dress and hat, and then there was that one who might be any age — where did *she* come in? They were looking around. "Isn't this lovely!" one of them was saying. What did they mean? Bert's brilliant eyes were watching them. They were pointing to that terrible old brown tile in which mother had some geraniums planted. "Look, Harry! Isn't that lovely?" They couldn't really think it was *lovely*. "Lovely" had a different, suspicious meaning as these women used it. Bert's eyes were devouring the details of their clothes. She led them into the house, burning with anxiety, sensitiveness, eagerness; she knew how many things were wrong.

"I suppose you folks would like to wash a little after your drive. We haven't any bathroom, I'm sorry to say. We want to have one; but this town is so slow, they've never piped the water out this far. But if you don't mind just washing in the old-fashioned wash-bowls —"

She hated that so. But they were nice about it.

"You know, you're out in the country," she said with a nervous laugh, "and you have to take us the way you find us."

She ushered the women into her best bedroom, the guest room off the parlor. This was the one room in the house in which she could take some pride. She had fixed it up with furniture she had painted herself, and she had put the stencil on the walls — all after the plan of the "Model Bedroom" in the household magazine for which she had taken subscriptions last winter.

"Now, if you'll just take off your hats and put them wherever you find a place." She was eager and flustered. "I'm afraid I'll have to ask you gentlemen to go upstairs." She was ashamed to take them up to her old room, full of horrid old dark furniture — was afraid, too, as she sped up the steep stairs ahead of them, although she knew it was all right; she had been up at four o'clock cleaning and getting the house ready. She banged the door of her mother's room shut as she went past. "Now I think you'll find everything —" She ran down.

The women were talking in the bedroom. She heard a soft laugh. She lingered in the front room, sensitive and alert, but she couldn't hear. The smartness of their clothes actually hurt her, showed her all kinds of unsuspected deficiencies in herself, although it pleased and gratified her too. They were the kind of people she wanted to know.

But when she went into the dining room and saw the table she was exultant again. "If you'll excuse me," she called, "I'm afraid I'll have to be in the kitchen." They were nice! Oh, dear. She had forgotten to ask the author to write in the visitors' book. She was going to have her book just as they did in the real Eastern tea-rooms Mrs. Elliott had told her about. Well, there was time. The table looked so sweet! And yet she was obscurely hurt and smarting. She wasn't sure those women weren't laughing.

Archie had come into the kitchen and was washing his hands. "Well, are they here?" he asked. He didn't exactly like their coming, or to have Bert always fussing around with things like this; but then, he was all right, he kept out of the way. Bert was taking the

roast chicken from the oven. Roasted, not fried. "People in the East never think of *frying* chicken." Mrs. Elliott had never tasted fried chicken all the time that she was in the East. Bert wanted these people to be able to say they had eaten as good a meal here in the Hillside Inn as ever they had got in any city restaurant. She had followed the menus in the cooking magazine. She was so excited now that the ordeal was on that she felt herself working in a kind of tense calm. She gave Arlie his dinner in the back kitchen. These people would see that she knew how things should be done.

"You can come in to dinner now."

There was a moment of quiet and formality as she seated them. They didn't exclaim like those last people. "Well, well, I didn't know we were going to find a first-class hotel here in Shell Spring!" that other man had cried. She served them, wondering if she oughtn't to have got in Donna Peterson to help her—but then, Donna wouldn't "know," and she wanted things right. She tried to remember what things should go to the right and what to the left. When she went out to the kitchen she ordered Maynard to keep back. She was going to bring him in after the meal, all dressed up in his little new suit, and just introduce him. "This is my little boy Maynard." She had read, in a story, about a mother doing that.

Through her preoccupation with the food and the serving—wondering if everything tasted just right—she heard snatches of the conversation. The people seemed a little tired, maybe from that long drive. "Well, this is familiar." What did they mean by that? Did they like the little napkins, or were they laughing at them? But those napkins were exactly the kind that were used in all the tea-rooms now! "Standardization, I tell you. It gets into all the corners." That meant nothing to Bert. They certainly must like those salads that May Douglas had said were simply too pretty to be eaten. Nice salads were things people here in town didn't fuss with—all those "do-dads" mother called them. The people were affable and talking among themselves, and yet Bert could sense that the dinner didn't seem to be going exactly as she had hoped that it would. She had somehow thought that they would be more astonished and delighted, and that they would take her right in with them. Her thin cheeks were flushed. In the kitchen it was as if she were working in a vacuum, not in that shining flush of triumph she knew and craved. How fast it was all going, how soon this great dinner would be over!

Mrs. Hohenschuh had come into the kitchen from the back way.

"Mother, you went and put on that old percale dress of yours, and I had that new one all laid out for you ready!" That seemed the crowning catastrophe. Bert suddenly began to tremble with anger. When she came into the kitchen the next time she whispered furiously, "You aren't going to let those people see you in that! Since you had to go put it on, just to be stubborn, you can stay out of sight." How could she ever get anywhere with all this family to pull up after her? Mother looked like an old farm woman. Bert felt ready to cry and could scarcely bear to hear the quiet sound of the voices in the dining room.

The coffee cups were all set out on the little old sewing table that she was using for a serving table. She was going to serve her coffee with dessert, the right way. "Ach, let 'em have their coffee!" Mrs. Hohenschuh pleaded. She thought it was terrible to deprive people of coffee all through a meal. She didn't much mind Bert's reproaches. "Ach, Bert, she always gets so cross when she's got anything to do, I don't know." The old lady made off into the garden. But Bert knew how mother was. It would be a miracle if she let any people get away without talking to them, and probably telling them the whole family history!

Bert took in the fragrant coffee and homemade ice cream. Well, they did like that! The woman in the cute green dress (she didn't seem to be the author's wife, after all; that was the one who didn't look nearly so much like "somebody"—it surprised Bert) said very flatteringly, "What delicious ice cream! Did you make it yourself?" The older woman—that was Mrs. Drayton—smiled up at Bert. The talk was freer now. The author seemed to be saying the least of any of them, though. That seemed funny to Bert. Mr. Drayton was lots more talkative and full of fun—peppier. She bet he could write awfully good stories, better than the other one, if he just wanted to.

She was almost happy, when she happened to look out of the window and saw mother climbing up from the cellarway outside, lugging something—a bottle! Oh, for . . . Before she got a chance to go out to the kitchen the old lady came, shy but beaming, into the room, with a big bottle of that dandelion wine. Bert was in torment. As if these people cared for anything like that!

But there mother stood and there was nothing to do but introduce her. Bert suffered agony. It was all the worse, somehow, that they were being so polite and nice. "This is my mother, Mrs. Hohenschuh." Mother began to beam at that. She loved to entertain peo-

ple — that was all right, of course; but she had never learned that people didn't do things the way she used to, any more.

And mother was starting right in.

"Well, I thought it was mean you folks had to go all that time without your coffee, so I just brought you something else to drink. If you ain't afraid somebody's going to get after you — ach, it's all so funny these days — maybe you'll take a little drink of this wine. It's dandelion. I made it."

Bert couldn't stand it. She made for the kitchen. She sat down there, clenched her fists, and felt that she would actually fly to pieces.

The voices were louder in the dining room. She heard delighted laughter. Yes, now mother had an audience, and she was just laying herself out for them — Bert knew how! She burned with humiliation. The whole thing was spoiled. How could anybody in this town try to do things the way they ought to be done?

Her mother came smiling out to the kitchen.

"Where are them little glasses gone?"

"Mother, *why* did you have to go in there with that stuff?"

"Ach, what are you fussing about? They like it"

Bert got up and began feverishly to clean the messy plates and stack them together. She couldn't eat a thing herself, not even good little crisp bits of chicken that were left. Mother had got hold of the people now. She heard them leave the dining room, and then the whole party trailed past the kitchen windows. Mother waddled in the lead. She was going to take them all out and show them her flower beds.

Maynard was whining. "Are you going to take me in and introduce me, mother?"

Bert looked at him, cold and remote.

"No."

They were all out in the garden. Mrs. Hohenschuh always thought it her duty as a hostess to take her guests out and show them everything she had. Here where she felt that she "had things nice," too — this place in town which she and Mr. Hohenschuh had bought when they moved in from the country — she could take real enjoyment with visitors, even if Bert did go on about the place and say how behind the times it was. But it was a long time since she had got hold of any people so appreciative as these.

"Well, I don't know as there's anything you folks'll care much about looking at (she didn't mean that; she said it in a rich, comfortable tone). I only got the same old kind of flowers I've always

had; they ain't any of these new-fangled kinds with fancy names here."

"Oh, we adore seeing them!" the woman in the green dress cried enthusiastically.

Mrs. Hohenschuh beamed. "Well, I think they're pretty nice; they suit me, but there's lots of folks nowadays wants different things, I guess. Ja! Anyway, that don't worry me. I let 'em talk. I go on doing things the way I want to."

The people all laughed, and she was gratified.

"Well, here's what I got. I put in all these things myself. Bert, she don't want to bother; she's got too many irons in the fire all the time."

"This is lovely!"

Mrs. Hohenschuh stood fat and beaming while they looked and wandered about. She thought her garden was pretty nice — ja, you bet she did! And these folks all seemed to think so too. Why, they was awful nice folks! Why had Bert got so fussed over having them here to dinner? Why, they was real nice and common! That one in the green dress (she was older than she wanted to let on, too, Mrs. Hohenschuh shrewdly judged) did the most running around and palavering; but those other two, that husband and wife, enjoyed things just as much. The man in the glasses was *real* nice. So was his wife, although she didn't have so much to say. But those other two, she kind of liked the best of the bunch. The woman was real sensible, the things she said and the questions she asked; and the man kind of trailed around after the others and looked at things on his own account, the way Mrs. Hohenschuh liked to have folks do. That showed he wasn't putting it on; he was really enjoying himself.

Along with her answers and her explanations, Mrs. Hohenschuh managed to get in a good part of the family history. Bert had a fit when she told things like that; but Mrs. Hohenschuh never felt right until she'd — well, kind of given folks the facts and the right idea about the family. They'd hear it all anyway, so she might as well tell it herself.

"Have you had your garden long, Mrs. Hohenschuh?"

"Ja, ever since we moved into town. That's — how long is it, a'ready? — ach, it's twenty years, I guess! Bert, she was only just in high school. That was partly why we come. The boys, they didn't get to finish; but Pa he said Bert was to get her diploma, she was always the smartest, anyway. Ja, how old was Bert then? She's thirty-seven now. Ja, she's such a thin little sliver, I don't know, women



seems to want to be that way now; but she's thirty-seven! Her and Arlie's been married twelve years a'ready; and then this here little fellow's all they've got! Ach, I don't know! "

As she talked, in her deep comfortable voice rich with chuckles and drolleries of German inflection, she waddled about among the flower beds, pointing out this kind and that. "These? Moss roses, I call 'em. I guess that ain't the right name, some folks says not; but they grow just the same — ain't that so? Ja, the old lady Douglas over there, when she was living, she had to have the right names for all her plants; but I told her mine grew better'n hers did if I did call 'em wrong! " The moss roses in their flat matted bed on the hot earth were gay spots of scarlet and crimson, yellow, cerise, and white. They made one of the women think of the colors in patchwork quilts, she said.

"She's got the real old honest-to-God peppermint! I haven't smelled any of that for years."

"Peppermint? Ja, that I always have. That I like too."

The woman in the green dress came running and clutched the other younger woman. "Come here, Jean! I want to show you. The pump! Isn't that just right? And see here — all these little flower-pots set out and slips started in them. Just see, this foliage stuff, this old red and green funny leaf stuff, my grandmother used to have that. And look back there! One of those big green wire flower stands that I suppose used to stand in the bay window. Didn't you just yearn to take your dolls promenading on that, and they wouldn't let you. because you might spoil the plants? Isn't this perfect? " Mrs. Hohenschuh had told them, "Ja, sure, you look around anywhere you want to; what's the use of hiding what you got? " Harry Whetstone had been enjoying the old lady's naïve revelations; but now he lounged about, poking into the woodshed where the light fell dim and dusty through a little square window high up in the wall, and into a tool shed where pans of seeds were set about in the midst of a clutter of ancient furniture. It was like going back thirty years.

There was a little apple orchard at the side, grown up to tall grass now; and there, on one of his silent excursions, he discovered a two-foot troll planted down in a tiny hollow with grass grown about the base as it binds in ancient tombstones, and a casual offering of fallen apples about his chipped feet. The woman in the green dress came running over.

"What have you found, Harry? Oh! Isn't that marvelous? Oh,

Mrs. Hohenschuh, we've found something simply wonderful. Won't you tell us what that is? "

" That? Ach, is that old thing still out there? Ja, it's funny, but then I don't know . . . Pa, he was the one that got that thing."

" It's German, isn't it? "

" Ja, it's German, all right. Pa, he come from the old country; he come over here when he was only eighteen years old. He had just twenty dollars when he landed in this country. Ja, it's German, that's what it is. Pa, he always wanted to fix up the back yard and make him a garden — that was why he got this funny fellow; that was one reason we moved into town when we did, because Pa wanted to fix up a place . . . ja, and then we hadn't lived here but a year or two when Pa got killed; he got run over; he was thinking of things the way he always done, and didn't hear the train coming . . . ja, that's the way of it! " But after a moment, she roused herself and went on, " Bert, she always had a fit over that fellow. She was the one took him out of the front yard and lugged him out here. But I don't know " — Mrs. Hohenschuh chuckled — " I always kind of liked the little fellow. He means good. You can see that. Well, I guess he's where she ain't likely to find him. She's too busy inside there to fool around out here. I'm the one does that."

Slowly, Mrs. Hohenschuh in the lead, they trailed away from the orchard. The troll, with his colors faded to dim faint tints and with curls chipped off his beard, stood smiling a one-sided but jovial smile at the rotting apples about his broken feet that had almost grown into the orchard ground.

Mrs. Hohenschuh picked one of each kind of flowers for every person. " Hold on, now! You ain't got any of the pansies yet." A circle of sticks set upright — little thin sticks with flaking bark — inclosed the colored pansies. The tiger lilies grew in a straggling bunch tied with twine. " Pick yourself some if you like 'em. Go ahead! " What else were the flowers here for? " Here's a color you ain't got, if you like them zinnies, Mrs. — well, you'll have to excuse me, I can't remember all you folks's names." The sun shone down brightly on the garden, blaring out the hot colors of the moss roses, throwing clear antique shadows from the grape arbor, glinting and losing itself in coolness in the thick wet grass around the pump through which silent little streams of water soaked slowly. They all had a drink before they went into the house. The sides of the cold glass were frosted with wet. The family story was entwined with their

wanderings among the paths of the garden, tangled with the colors of the flowers, and brightened over with sunshine.

The house seemed cool when they went inside.

"Oh, you don't want to go yet! Come in and set awhile and let's finish our visit."

Mrs. Hohenschuh led them into the parlor.

"There's lots of things you ain't seen yet."

Mrs. Drayton was tired, even Mr. Drayton — although still genial — was ready to stop; but the others seemed insatiable, and the writer most of all. Bert had heard her mother's invitation and burned with helpless shame. What else was mother going to show? There was no chance for her talk with the author. It was hopeless trying to lead mother off now. Bert followed the others into the front room.

"I'll show you Pa's picture, Mr. — ach, that name's gone again! Well, I guess you know I mean you, don't you? Sure! That's right."

She got down that old faded purple plush album that held all the family pictures: Bert and the boys when they were youngsters, Mr. Hohenschuh when he first came to this country, chance pictures of shamefaced hired men. The writer looked at all the pictures with a gravity that Bert couldn't fathom, Mr. Drayton laughed and made funny remarks about the clothes that pleased mother, and Mrs. Drayton looked at everything last with a pleased but tired smile; she wasn't quite in on all the things the others were, Bert thought. "Ja, look at that one! Ain't he funny-looking, though? He was a cousin of mine. Ja, now they all look funny." Bert sat and suffered. Maynard sidled into the room. He couldn't give up the promise of being introduced. They were all nice to him. The women smiled. But they went on making that fuss over mother.

When she had shown them the photographs she had to let them see her other things: the shells and the "curios" that she prized so, and that she kept on a shelf in the bookcase. "Look here! Did you ever see anything like this before?" How could they act so pleased, unless they were just false and putting it on to get mother to make a fool of herself? Bert could have cried. That shell! Of course they'd seen shells. They'd been everywhere. Those old feathers from the tail of the peacock they used to have out on the farm; the cocoanut husk with the stamps and address label on it; that big long German pipe; the glass paperweight with the snowfall inside. What else could she find to show them? They were asking about fancy work. Did she ever make the real old knitted lace? Ja, not so much knit as crochet, though — wait, she'd show them! It would be just like

her to ask them all up to her room to look through those terrible drawers — and if she did that Bert was ready to kill herself. That room of mother's (and it wasn't any use talking to her about it, Bert couldn't make her do a *thing*) with dresses hanging on nails, and quilts piled up in the corner, drawers filled with old shawls, pieces of cloth, silk gowns, baby dresses — a perfect museum!

Well, they weren't paying any attention to her and Maynard anyway, so Bert went back to the dining room. She might as well clear off the table. At least they were staying a long time and seemed to be enjoying themselves. In that way she supposed the dinner was a success. But she had thought that she could talk to them. It was she to whom they ought to be paying attention — she who appreciated them, and knew how different they were, and wanted to be like them; they couldn't really mean it when they made such a fuss over mother. They must be laughing at her. What could they see in all this old junk? That was the kind of stuff that Bert was trying so hard to get rid of. That was what the tearoom was *for* — so that she could make some money, and get to know the right kind of folks, and maybe live like other people in other places. All the very awfullest things in the house — things *nobody* had any more! What kind of an idea of the family would they have? She looked into the parlor, and there was mother getting out all her old fancy work; that terrible piece, that huge table spread, with squarish horses and dogs and roosters crocheted into it, and they were saying "lovely"! She heard them.

"That dress! Isn't it perfect? The real thing."

"Oh, she's a jewel!"

"Lovely!"

They were going at last. They were very nice to Bert then, as if they realized that she had been neglected. The women sought her out in the dining room. "Such a good dinner you gave us!"

"Well, I'm glad you liked it. I didn't know . . ."

She followed them into the parlor, feeling appeased and excited again, even though she seemed to scent a tactful patronage. But they were all complimenting her now; and she drank in the praise, eagerly, but afraid to believe they meant it.

Mr. Drayton had taken her aside. "And what do we owe you for this fine meal you gave us?" he asked in a low, genial tone.

"Well . . . a dollar apiece," Bert said firmly. She had heard that all the city tearooms charged a dollar and a quarter now. Of course, she couldn't ask quite as much as a city tearoom, that had everything just up to snuff; but her dinner was good, and she knew it,

and she was going to stick to business. He didn't seem to think that she was charging them too much, however. He counted out some bills and handed them right over to her. But when she came to look at them, there were too many — a five and an extra one!

"Oh, I can't — why, you've given me —"

He tapped her shoulder. "That's all right. Don't notice it. Doesn't begin to pay for the entertainment we've had here."

She still protested, flushed and happy, but he wouldn't listen to her; so she guessed there was nothing else for her to do.

She hadn't forgotten about the visitors' book. She got it out now. All the tearooms in the East had those, Mrs. Elliott had said. She had seen several famous names in one place where she had eaten. It advertised the place; and then it was an honor, too, to think that such people had eaten there. Bert was a little bashful but determined.

"I hope you don't mind before you go." She laid down the new visitors' book, a notebook with black covers from the drugstore, before the author. "I'd like to have you put your name in my book so other folks can see you've been here."

He didn't seem very much flattered about it, she thought, but anyway he wasn't going to refuse. How funny! She would have supposed it would please folks to be asked to do things like that. The others teased him a little. "You can't escape, Harry!" They seemed to think it was some sort of joke. Bert stood flushed, waiting and determined. She said generously that she wanted all the other names, too.

"Yes, I do. You're all along with Mr. Whetstone. Anyway, I know you're all . . ." She meant to say "important," or something of that kind, too; but she couldn't just seem to finish it.

"Well, go on, girls. Sign yourselves," Mr. Drayton commanded.

They all signed. Mrs. Drayton blushed when she did it.

Bert wasn't through with the author yet. Before she let him go she was going to get all she'd meant to get out of him.

"I wondered if you'd let me use your name, Mr. Whetstone."

He still had that funny, kind of bored way. His wife was really nicer.

"Say he ate with a large appetite, even mightier than usual," Mrs. Whetstone said.

But it seemed to Bert they were all amused.

She wanted to talk to the author about his books. She thought she ought to do that. "You know I never met an author before," she said. "I've always been wanting to, because" — she flushed —

"well, I've always wanted to write myself. I always thought I could if I just had the time to do it."

"Don't," he assured her solemnly. But he wasn't as impressed as she had thought he would be. "It's much better to cook biscuits like those we devoured this noon. Infinitely better to make dandelion wine like your mother."

He was joking, of course. But Bert didn't quite like it. She had meant what she said, seriously, and she had thought he would encourage her.

Mrs. Hohenschuh came into the house, waddling and breathless.

"Dandelion wine!" she cried. "Ja, if you liked that, then you come back here and you'll get some of my wild grape this fall. You come and let *me* get you up a dinner. I'll give you some real genuine fried chicken and you won't have to wait all meal for your coffee."

They all laughed. They seemed to think that that was *funny*. The author said that he would certainly come! He'd wanted a meal like that for the last fifteen years. Mother had been out in the garden again. She had dug up some plants and wrapped them in newspapers, and brought some slips for the women to take along and set out.

"You take these with you. Sure, you go ahead!"

She parceled them out right and left and gave directions. The people went out to the car swamped with packages. They were thanking Mrs. Hohenschuh profusely, and promising to do just as she told them, laughing delightedly at everything she said. She went right up to the car with them, as she always did with people who were leaving. Bert stood back with the bills wadded up in her hot hand, and with Maynard beside her. They had complimented her on the dinner, done all she had asked of them; but she had thought that from *these* people — the kind she admired, not just the folks in town who had never known what she was after — she would get her own appreciation at last.

"Good-by, Mrs. Hohenschuh. We certainly enjoyed this."

"You come again, all of you. You just drop in any time you feel like it."

"I'm coming back someday to hear more of those stories," the writer warned her.

"Ach, them old-time stories? Ja, I know plenty of them!"

"And we're coming after that dinner, Mrs. Hohenschuh. Real old fried chicken. Remember! You've promised us."

Mr. Drayton took the wheel, the big engine started humming, the car rolled ahead. They waved — they were going.

" Good-by, Mrs. Statzer! . . . And Maynard! "

But they had to remember to call back that.

" Well! " Mrs. Hohenschuh said gratified, climbing back onto the walk. " They was real nice folks! I don't see why you made such a fuss over having them. You needn't. The other way would have been just as good."

" Look at your hands, mother! " Bert said bitterly.

" Ja, I know. I dug up them plants. Well, it don't matter now, they're gone anyway."

She waddled serenely to the house.

Bert stood looking after the car, still clutching her bills. She would be able to report to May that the dinner had been a success. The people had enjoyed themselves; they had paid her well, let her have their recommendations. Her tearoom was started. But the thing she had wanted most of all, and waited for all her life — their appreciation — they had given to mother, who couldn't even understand or care for it. Bert didn't yet see what their idea was.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Explain why May was so impressed with Bert's efforts, while the strangers were somewhat contemptuous. What is Bert's state of mind at the end of the story?

2. Why was Bert ashamed of her mother? Had she reason to be? Why is Mrs. Hohenschuh more admirable than Bert?

3. Why does Miss Suckow sometimes use ungrammatical expressions such as these: " they was real nice and common "; " she kind of liked "; " awful nice folks " ?

4. Compare the way the characters are drawn in this story with the way they are drawn in " Ring around a Rosy " by Sinclair Lewis.

5. Have you seen any of Grant Wood's Iowa portraits, such as " Woman with Plants," or " American Gothic " ? In what ways do Ruth Suckow's stories resemble Grant Wood's paintings?

6. Relate an incident or write a short essay in which you show that it pays to be sincere.

7. Vocabulary: affable, nonchalance, preoccupation, troll, insatiable, patronage.

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

8. A good word to learn exactly and remember is one for which there is no one-word substitute. Such a word is *naïve* (page 200), used by Miss Suckow to describe the old mother's revelations to the distinguished visitors.

It means natural and artless, and implies possibilities of being amusing to others less *naïve*. We often laugh at the *naïvete* of a child. The opposite of *naïve* is *sophisticated*, which means worldly-wise without implying any other sort of wisdom. *Unsophisticated* means very nearly the same as *naïve*, but emphasizes the lack of *sophistication* rather than simple naturalness.

## JOHN STEINBECK (1902- )

To read John Steinbeck is to enlarge one's understanding and sympathies. His characters are for the most part California workers and farmers — Mexican cannery workers, transient fruit pickers, cattle ranchers, labor organizers. Steinbeck, California born and reared, knows these people intimately from having worked and lived among them, and in his stories he presents them with great vividness and realism. The reader sees and hears them, the particular feature, the specific mannerism, the turn of speech that individualizes each one. Few writers equal Steinbeck in his ability to observe objectively and in his skillful use of concrete detail. But Steinbeck is not content merely to display the character in action. He wants to show why the character acts and reacts as he does. To this greater task, Steinbeck brings a profound understanding of and sympathy with people, all kinds of people. Many of his characters are alien to the ordinary reader's experience, they are violent, or frustrated, or abnormal. But by masterly and compassionate presentation of their backgrounds and their motives, Steinbeck induces understanding in the reader — understanding, and oftentimes overwhelming pity.

John Steinbeck's first novels and stories were published in the early thirties. In 1937 he won a national audience with *Of Mice and Men*, and *The Grapes of Wrath* was the most talked about novel of 1939, as well as winner of the Pulitzer prize.

## FLIGHT

Across the California country that Steinbeck knows best, from the Monterey coast line to the desert interior. Pepe, the Mexican-Indian boy, a murderer, makes his flight. Steinbeck lays a careful foundation, he takes time to show us Pepe's background and to enlist our sympathies. But once the flight has begun the story moves with terrible directness. We do not swerve our attention to ask about the pursuers. It is only Pepe who matters, his desperation and his anguish and his fate.



ABOUT FIFTEEN miles below Monterey, on the wild coast, the Torres family had their farm, a few sloping acres above a cliff that dropped to the brown reefs and to the hissing white waters of the ocean. Behind the farm the stone mountains stood up against the sky. The farm buildings huddled like little clinging aphids on the mountain skirts, crouched low to the ground as though the wind might blow them into the sea. The little shack, the rattling, rotting barn were gray-bitten with sea salt, beaten by the damp wind until they had taken on the color of the granite hills. Two horses, a red cow and a red calf, half a dozen pigs and a flock of lean, multicolored chickens stocked the place. A little corn was raised on the sterile slope, and it grew short and thick under the wind, and all the cobs formed on the landward sides of the stalks.

Mama Torres, a lean, dry woman with ancient eyes, had ruled the farm for ten years, ever since her husband tripped over a stone in the field one day and fell full length on a rattlesnake. When one is bitten on the chest there is not much that can be done.

Mama Torres had three children, two undersized black ones of twelve and fourteen, Emilio and Rosy, whom Mama kept fishing on the rocks below the farm when the sea was kind and when the truant officer was in some distant part of Monterey County. And there was Pepé, the tall smiling son of nineteen, a gentle, affectionate boy, but very lazy. Pepé had a tall head, pointed at the top, and from its peak coarse black hair grew down like a thatch all around. Over his smiling little eyes Mama cut a straight bang so he could see. Pepé had sharp Indian cheekbones and an eagle nose, but his mouth was as sweet and shapely as a girl's mouth, and his chin was fragile and chiseled. He was loose and gangling, all legs and feet and wrists, and he was very lazy. Mama thought him fine and brave, but she never told him so. She said, "Some lazy cow must have got into thy father's family, else how could I have a son like thee." And she said, "When I carried thee, a sneaking lazy coyote came out of the brush and looked at me one day. That must have made thee so."

Pepé smiled sheepishly and stabbed at the ground with his knife to keep the blade sharp and free from rust. It was his inheritance, that knife, his father's knife. The long heavy blade folded back into the black handle. There was a button on the handle. When Pepé pressed the button, the blade leaped out ready for use. The knife was with Pepé always, for it had been his father's knife.

One sunny morning when the sea below the cliff was glinting and blue and the white surf creamed on the reef, when even the stone

mountains looked kindly, Mama Torres called out the door of the shack, "Pepé, I have a labor for thee."

There was no answer. Mama listened. From behind the barn she heard a burst of laughter. She lifted her full long skirt and walked in the direction of the noise.

Pepé was sitting on the ground with his back against a box. His white teeth glistened. On either side of him stood the two black ones, tense and expectant. Fifteen feet away a redwood post was set in the ground. Pepé's right hand lay limply in his lap, and in the palm the big black knife rested. The blade was closed back into the handle. Pepé looked smiling at the sky.

Suddenly Emilio cried, "Ya!"

Pepé's wrist flicked like the head of a snake. The blade seemed to fly open in mid-air, and with a thump the point dug into the redwood post, and the black handle quivered. The three burst into excited laughter. Rosy ran to the post and pulled out the knife and brought it back to Pepé. He closed the blade and settled the knife carefully in his listless palm again. He grinned self-consciously at the sky.

"Ya!"

The heavy knife lanced out and sunk into the post again. Mama moved forward like a ship and scattered the play.

"All day you do foolish things with the knife, like a toy baby," she stormed. "Get up on thy huge feet that eat up shoes. Get up!" She took him by one loose shoulder and hoisted at him. Pepé grinned sheepishly and came halfheartedly to his feet. "Look!" Mama cried. "Big lazy, you must catch the horse and put on him thy father's saddle. You must ride to Monterey. The medicine bottle is empty. There is no salt. Go thou now, Peanut! Catch the horse."

A revolution took place in the relaxed figure of Pepé. "To Monterey, me? Alone? *Sí*, Mama."

She scowled at him. "Do not think, big sheep, that you will buy candy. No, I will give you only enough for the medicine and the salt."

Pepé smiled. "Mama, you will put the hatband on the hat?"

She relented then. "Yes, Pepé. You may wear the hatband."

His voice grew insinuating, "And the green handkerchief, Mama?"

"Yes, if you go quickly and return with no trouble, the silk green handkerchief will go. If you make sure to take off the handkerchief when you eat so no spot may fall on it."

"*Sí*, Mama. I will be careful. I am a man."

"Thou? A man? Thou art a peanut."

He went into the rickety barn and brought out a rope, and he walked agilely enough up the hill to catch the horse.

When he was ready and mounted before the door, mounted on his father's saddle that was so old that the oaken frame showed through torn leather in many places, then Mama brought out the round black hat with the tooled leather band, and she reached up and knotted the green silk handkerchief about his neck. Pepé's blue denim coat was much darker than his jeans, for it had been washed much less often.

Mama handed up the big medicine bottle and the silver coins. "That for the medicine," she said, "and that for the salt. That for a candle to burn for the papa. That for *dulces*<sup>1</sup> for the little ones. Our friend Mrs. Rodriguez will give you dinner and maybe a bed for the night. When you go to the church say only ten paternosters and only twenty-five Ave Marias. Oh! I know, big coyote. You would sit there flapping your mouth over Aves all day while you looked at the candles and the holy pictures. That is not good devotion to stare at the pretty things."

The black hat, covering the high pointed head and black thatched hair of Pepé, gave him dignity and age. He sat the rangy horse well. Mama thought how handsome he was, dark and lean and tall. "I would not send thee now alone, thou little one, except for the medicine," she said softly. "It is not good to have no medicine, for who knows when the toothache will come, or the sadness of the stomach. These things are."

"*Adios, Mama,*" Pepé cried. "I will come back soon. You may send me often alone. I am a man."

"Thou art a foolish chicken."

He straightened his shoulders, flipped the reins against the horse's shoulder and rode away. He turned once and saw that they still watched him, Emilio and Rosy and Mama. Pepé grinned with pride and gladness and lifted the tough buckskin horse to a trot.

When he had dropped out of sight over a little dip in the road, Mama turned to the black ones, but she spoke to herself. "He is nearly a man now," she said. "It will be a nice thing to have a man in the house again." Her eyes sharpened on the children. "Go to the rocks now. The tide is going out. There will be abalones to be found." She put the iron hooks into their hands and saw them down the steep trail to the reefs. She brought the smooth stone metate to the doorway and sat grinding her corn to flour and looking occasionally at the road over which Pepé had gone. The noon-day came and then the afternoon, when the little ones beat the

<sup>1</sup> *dulces*: sweets (Spanish.)

abalones on a rock to make them tender and Mama patted the *tortillas* to make them thin. They ate their dinner as the red sun was plunging down toward the ocean. They sat on the doorsteps and watched a big white moon come over the mountaintops.

Mama said, "He is now at the house of our friend Mrs. Rodriguez. She will give him nice things to eat and maybe a present."

Emilio said, "Someday I, too, will ride to Monterey for medicine. Did Pepé come to be a man today?"

Mama said wisely, "A boy gets to be a man when a man is needed. Remember this thing. I have known boys forty years old because there was no need for a man."

Soon afterward they retired, Mama in her big oak bed on one side of the room, Emilio and Rosy in their boxes full of straw and sheepskins on the other side of the room.

The moon went over the sky and the surf roared on the rocks. The roosters crowed the first call. The surf subsided to a whispering surge against the reef. The moon dropped toward the sea. The roosters crowed again.

The moon was near down to the water when Pepé rode on a winded horse to his home flat. His dog bounced out and circled the horse yelping with pleasure. Pepé slid off the saddle to the ground. The weathered little shack was silver in the moonlight and the square shadow of it was black to the north and east. Against the east the piling mountains were misty with light: their tops melted into the sky.

Pepé walked wearily up the three steps and into the house. It was dark inside. There was a rustle in the corner.

Mama cried out from her bed. "Who comes? Pepé, is it thou?"

"*Sí*, Mama."

"Did you get the medicine?"

"*Sí*, Mama."

"Well, go to sleep, then. I thought you would be sleeping at the house of Mrs. Rodriguez." Pepé stood silently in the dark room. "Why do you stand there, Pepé? Did you drink wine?"

"*Sí*, Mama."

"Well, go to bed then and sleep out the wine."

His voice was tired and patient, but very firm. "Light the candle, Mama. I must go away into the mountains."

"What is this, Pepé? You are crazy." Mama struck a sulphur match and held the little blue burr until the flame spread up the stick. She set light to the candle on the floor beside her bed. "Now, Pepé, what is this you say?" She looked anxiously into his face.

He was changed. The fragile quality seemed to have gone from his chin. His mouth was less full than it had been, the lines of the lips were straighter, but in his eyes the greatest change had taken place. There was no laughter in them any more, nor any bashfulness. They were sharp and bright and purposeful.

He told her in a tired monotone, told her everything just as it had happened. A few people came into the kitchen of Mrs. Rodriguez. There was wine to drink. Pepé drank wine. The little quarrel — the man started toward Pepé and then the knife — it went almost by itself. It flew, it darted before Pepé knew it. As he talked, Mama's face grew stern, and it seemed to grow more lean. Pepé finished. "I am a man now, Mama. The man said names to me I could not allow."

Mama nodded. "Yes, thou art a man, my poor little Pepé. Thou art a man. I have seen it coming on thee. I have watched you throwing the knife into the post, and I have been afraid." For a moment her face had softened, but now it grew stern again. "Come! We must get you ready. Go. Awaken Emilio and Rosy. Go quickly."

Pepé stepped over to the corner where his brother and sister slept among the sheepskins. He leaned down and shook them gently. "Come, Rosy! Come, Emilio! The Mama says you must arise."

The little black ones sat up and rubbed their eyes in the candlelight. Mama was out of bed now, her long black skirt over her nightgown. "Emilio," she cried. "Go up and catch the other horse for Pepé. Quickly, now! Quickly." Emilio put his legs in his overalls and stumbled sleepily out the door.

"You heard no one behind you on the road?" Mama demanded.

"No, Mama. I listened carefully. No one was on the road."

Mama darted like a bird about the room. From a nail on the wall she took a canvas water bag and threw it on the floor. She stripped a blanket from her bed and rolled it into a tight tube and tied the ends with string. From a box beside the stove she lifted a flour sack half full of black stringy jerky. "Your father's black coat, Pepé. Here, put it on."

Pepé stood in the middle of the floor watching her activity. She reached behind the door and brought out the rifle, a long 38-56, worn shiny the whole length of the barrel. Pepé took it from her and held it in the crook of his elbow. Mama brought a little leather bag and counted the cartridges into his hand. "Only ten left," she warned. "You must not waste them."

Emilio put his head in the door. "'Qui 'st 'l caballo,<sup>1</sup> Mama."

<sup>1</sup> 'Qui 'st 'l caballo: Here is the horse. (Colloquial Spanish.)

"Put on the saddle from the other horse. Tie on the blanket. Here, tie the jerky to the saddle horn."

Still Pepé stood silently watching his mother's frantic activity. His chin looked hard, and his sweet mouth was drawn and thin. His little eyes followed Mama about the room almost suspiciously.

Rosy asked softly, "Where goes Pepé?"

Mama's eyes were fierce. "Pepé goes on a journey. Pepé is a man now. He has a man's thing to do."

Pepé straightened his shoulders. His mouth changed until he looked very much like Mama.

At last the preparation was finished. The loaded horse stood outside the door. The water bag dripped a line of moisture down the bay shoulder.

The moonlight was being thinned by the dawn and the big white moon was near down to the sea. The family stood by the shack. Mama confronted Pepé. "Look, my son! Do not stop until it is dark again. Do not sleep even though you are tired. Take care of the horse in order that he may not stop of weariness. Remember to be careful with the bullets — there are only ten. Do not fill thy stomach with jerky or it will make thee sick. Eat a little jerky and fill thy stomach with grass. When thou comest to the high mountains, if thou seest any of the dark watching men, go not near to them nor try to speak to them. And forget not thy prayers." She put her lean hands on Pepé's shoulders, stood on her toes and kissed him formally on both cheeks, and Pepé kissed her on both cheeks. Then he went to Emilio and Rosy and kissed both of their cheeks.

Pepé turned back to Mama. He seemed to look for a little softness, a little weakness in her. His eyes were searching, but Mama's face remained fierce. "Go now," she said. "Do not wait to be caught like a chicken."

Pepé pulled himself into the saddle. "I am a man," he said.

It was the first dawn when he rode up the hill toward the little canyon which let a trail into the mountains. Moonlight and daylight fought with each other, and the two warring qualities made it difficult to see. Before Pepé had gone a hundred yards, the outlines of his figure were misty; and long before he entered the canyon, he had become a gray, indefinite shadow.

Mama stood stiffly in front of her doorstep, and on either side of her stood Emilio and Rosy. They cast furtive glances at Mama now and then.

When the gray shape of Pepé melted into the hillside and disap-

peared, Mama relaxed. She began the high, whining keen of the death wail. "Our beautiful — our brave," she cried. "Our protector, our son is gone." Emilio and Rosy moaned beside her. "Our beautiful — our brave, he is gone." It was the formal wail. It rose to a high piercing whine and subsided to a moan. Mama raised it three times and then she turned and went into the house and shut the door.

Emilio and Rosy stood wondering in the dawn. They heard Mama whimpering in the house. They went out to sit on the cliff above the ocean. They touched shoulders. "When did Pepé come to be a man?" Emilio asked.

"Last night," said Rosy. "Last night in Monterey." The ocean clouds turned red with the sun that was behind the mountains.

"We will have no breakfast," said Emilio. "Mama will not want to cook." Rosy did not answer him. "Where is Pepé gone?" he asked.

Rosy looked around at him. She drew her knowledge from the quiet air. "He has gone on a journey. He will never come back."

"Is he dead? Do you think he is dead?"

Rosy looked back at the ocean again. A little steamer, drawing a line of smoke, sat on the edge of the horizon. "He is not dead," Rosy explained. "Not yet."

Pepé rested the big rifle across the saddle in front of him. He let the horse walk up the hill and he didn't look back. The stony slope took on a coat of short brush so that Pepé found the entrance to a trail and entered it.

When he came to the canyon opening, he swung once in his saddle and looked back, but the houses were swallowed in the misty light. Pepé jerked forward again. The high shoulder of the canyon closed in on him. His horse stretched out its neck and sighed and settled to the trail.

It was a well-worn path, dark soft leaf-mold earth strewn with broken pieces of sandstone. The trail rounded the shoulder of the canyon and dropped steeply into the bed of the stream. In the shallows the water ran smoothly, glinting in the first morning sun. Small round stones on the bottom were as brown as rust with sun moss. In the sand along the edges of the stream the tall, rich wild mint grew, while in the water itself the cress, old and tough, had gone to heavy seed.

The path went into the stream and emerged on the other side. The

horse sloshed into the water and stopped. Pepé dropped his bridle and let the beast drink of the running water.

Soon the canyon sides became steep and the first giant sentinel redwoods guarded the trail, great round red trunks bearing foliage as green and lacy as ferns. Once Pepé was among the trees, the sun was lost. A perfumed and purple light lay in the pale green of the underbrush. Gooseberry bushes and blackberries and tall ferns lined the stream, and overhead the branches of the redwoods met and cut off the sky.

Pepé drank from the water bag, and he reached into the flour sack and brought out a black string of jerky. His white teeth gnawed at the string until the tough meat parted. He chewed slowly and drank occasionally from the water bag. His little eyes were slumberous and tired, but the muscles of his face were hard-set. The earth of the trail was black now. It gave up a hollow sound under the walking hoofbeats.

The stream fell more sharply. Little waterfalls splashed on the stones. Five-fingered ferns hung over the water and dripped spray from their finger tips. Pepé rode half over in his saddle, dangling one leg loosely. He picked a bay leaf from a tree beside the way and put it into his mouth for a moment to flavor the dry jerky. He held the gun loosely across the pommel.

Suddenly he squared in his saddle, swung the horse from the trail and kicked it hurriedly up behind a big redwood tree. He pulled up the reins tight against the bit to keep the horse from whinnying. His face was intent and his nostrils quivered a little.

A hollow pounding came down the trail, and a horseman rode by, a fat man with red cheeks and a white stubble beard. His horse put down its head and blubbered at the trail when it came to the place where Pepé had turned off. "Hold up!" said the man, and he pulled up his horse's head.

When the last sound of the hoofs died away, Pepé came back into the trail again. He did not relax in the saddle any more. He lifted the big rifle and swung the lever to throw a shell into the chamber, and then he let down the hammer to half cock.

The trail grew very steep. Now the redwood trees were smaller and their tops were dead, bitten dead where the wind reached them. The horse plodded on; the sun went slowly overhead and started down toward the afternoon.

Where the stream came out of a side canyon, the trail left it. Pepé dismounted and watered his horse and filled up his water bag. As



soon as the trail had parted from the stream, the trees were gone and only the thick brittle sage and manzanita and chaparral edged the trail. And the soft black earth was gone, too, leaving only the light tan broken rock for the trail bed. Lizards scampered away into the brush as the horse rattled over the little stones.

Pepé turned in his saddle and looked back. He was in the open now: he could be seen from a distance. As he ascended the trail the country grew more rough and terrible and dry. The way wound about the bases of great square rocks. Little gray rabbits skittered in the brush. A bird made a monotonous high creaking. Eastward the bare rock mountaintops were pale and powder-dry under the dropping sun. The horse plodded up and up the trail toward a little V in the ridge which was the pass.

Pepé looked suspiciously back every minute or so, and his eyes sought the tops of the ridges ahead. Once, on a white barren spur, he saw a black figure for a moment; but he looked quickly away, for it was one of the dark watchers. No one knew who the watchers were, nor where they lived, but it was better to ignore them and never to show interest in them. They did not bother one who stayed on the trail and minded his own business.

The air was parched and full of light dust blown by the breeze from the eroding mountains. Pepé drank sparingly from his bag and corked it tightly and hung it on the horn again. The trail moved up the dry shale hillside, avoiding rocks, dropping under clefts, climbing in and out of old water scars. When he arrived at the little pass he stopped and looked back for a long time. No dark watchers were to be seen now. The trail behind was empty. Only the high tops of the redwoods indicated where the stream flowed.

Pepé rode on through the pass. His little eyes were nearly closed with weariness, but his face was stern, relentless and manly. The high mountain wind coasted sighing through the pass and whistled on the edges of the big blocks of broken granite. In the air, a red-tailed hawk sailed over close to the ridge and screamed angrily. Pepé went slowly through the broken jagged pass and looked down on the other side.

The trail dropped quickly, staggering among broken rock. At the bottom of the slope there was a dark crease, thick with brush, and on the other side of the crease a little flat, in which a grove of oak trees grew. A scar of green grass cut across the flat. And behind the flat another mountain rose, desolate with dead rocks and starving little black bushes. Pepé drank from the bag again for the air was so

dry that it encrusted his nostrils and burned his lips. He put the horse down the trail. The hoofs slipped and struggled on the steep way, starting little stones that rolled off into the brush. The sun was gone behind the westward mountain now, but still it glowed brilliantly on the oaks and on the grassy flat. The rocks and the hillsides still sent up waves of the heat they had gathered from the day's sun.

Pepé looked up to the top of the next dry withered ridge. He saw a dark form against the sky, a man's figure standing on top of a rock, and he glanced away quickly not to appear curious. When a moment later he looked up again, the figure was gone.

Downward the trail was quickly covered. Sometimes the horse floundered for footing, sometimes set his feet and slid a little way. They came at last to the bottom where the dark chaparral was higher than Pepé's head. He held up his rifle on one side and his arm on the other to shield his face from the sharp brittle fingers of the brush.

Up and out of the crease he rode, and up a little cliff. The grassy flat was before him, and the round comfortable oaks. For a moment he studied the trail down which he had come, but there was no movement and no sound from it. Finally he rode out over the flat, to the green streak, and at the upper end of the damp he found a little spring welling out of the earth and dropping into a dug basin before it seeped out over the flat.

Pepé filled his bag first, and then he let the thirsty horse drink out of the pool. He led the horse to the clump of oaks, and in the middle of the grove, fairly protected from sight on all sides, he took off the saddle and the bridle and laid them on the ground. The horse stretched his jaws sideways and yawned. Pepé knotted the lead rope about the horse's neck and tied him to a sapling among the oaks, where he could graze in a fairly large circle.

When the horse was gnawing hungrily at the dry grass, Pepé went to the saddle and took a black string of jerky from the sack and strolled to an oak tree on the edge of the grove, from under which he could watch the trail. He sat down in the crisp dry oak leaves and automatically felt for his big black knife to cut the jerky, but he had no knife. He leaned back on his elbow and gnawed at the tough strong meat. His face was blank, but it was a man's face.

The bright evening light washed the eastern ridge, but the valley was darkening. Doves flew down from the hills to the spring, and the quail came running out of the brush and joined them, calling clearly to one another.

Out of the corner of his eye Pepé saw a shadow grow out of the

bushy crease. He turned his head slowly. A big spotted wildcat was creeping toward the spring, belly to the ground, moving like thought.

Pepé cocked his rifle and edged the muzzle slowly around. Then he looked apprehensively up the trail and dropped the hammer again. From the ground beside him he picked an oak twig and threw it toward the spring. The quail flew up with a roar and the doves whistled away. The big cat stood up: for a long moment he looked at Pepé with cold yellow eyes, and then fearlessly walked back into the gulch.

The dusk gathered quickly in the deep valley. Pepé muttered his prayers, put his head down on his arm and went instantly to sleep.

The moon came up and filled the valley with cold blue light, and the wind swept rustling down from the peaks. The owls worked up and down the slopes looking for rabbits. Down in the brush of the gulch a coyote gabbled. The oak trees whispered softly in the night breeze.

Pepé started up, listening. His horse had whinnied. The moon was just slipping behind the western ridge, leaving the valley in darkness behind it. Pepé sat tensely gripping his rifle. From far up the trail he heard an answering whinny and the crash of shod hoofs on the broken rock. He jumped to his feet, ran to his horse and led it under the trees. He threw on the saddle and cinched it tight for the steep trail, caught the unwilling head and forced the bit into the mouth. He felt the saddle to make sure the water bag and the sack of jerky were there. Then he mounted and turned up the hill.

It was velvet-dark. The horse found the entrance to the trail where it left the flat, and started up, stumbling and slipping on the rocks. Pepé's hand rose up to his head. His hat was gone. He had left it under the oak tree.

The horse had struggled far up the trail when the first change of dawn came into the air, a steel grayness as light mixed thoroughly with dark. Gradually the sharp snagged edge of the ridge stood out above them, rotten granite tortured and eaten by the winds of time. Pepé had dropped his reins on the horn, leaving direction to the horse. The brush grabbed at his legs in the dark until one knee of his jeans was ripped.

Gradually the light flowed down over the ridge. The starved brush and rocks stood out in the half-light, strange and lonely in high perspective. Then there came warmth into the light. Pepé drew up and

looked back, but he could see nothing in the darker valley below. The sky turned blue over the coming sun. In the waste of the mountain-side, the poor dry brush grew only three feet high. Here and there, big outcroppings of unrotted granite stood up like moldering houses. Pepé relaxed a little. He drank from his water bag and bit off a piece of jerky. A single eagle flew over, high in the light.

Without warning Pepé's horse screamed and fell on its side. He was almost down before the rifle crash echoed up from the valley. From a hole behind the struggling shoulder, a stream of bright crimson blood pumped and stopped and pumped and stopped. The hoofs thrashed on the ground. Pepé lay half stunned beside the horse. He looked slowly down the hill. A piece of sage clipped off beside his head and another crash echoed up from side to side of the canyon. Pepé flung himself frantically behind a bush.

He crawled up the hill on his knees and one hand. His right hand held the rifle up off the ground and pushed it ahead of him. He moved with the instinctive care of an animal. Rapidly he wormed his way toward one of the big outcroppings of granite on the hill above him. Where the brush was high he doubled up and ran; but where the cover was slight he wriggled forward on his stomach, pushing the rifle ahead of him. In the last little distance there was no cover at all. Pepé poised and then he darted across the space and flashed around the corner of the rock.

He leaned panting against the stone. When his breath came easier he moved along behind the big rock until he came to a narrow split that offered a thin section of vision down the hill. Pepé lay on his stomach and pushed the rifle barrel through the slit and waited.

The sun reddened the western ridges now. Already the buzzards were settling down toward the place where the horse lay. A small brown bird scratched in the dead sage leaves directly in front of the rifle muzzle. The coasting eagle flew back toward the rising sun.

Pepé saw a little movement in the brush far below. His grip tightened on the gun. A little brown doe stepped daintily out on the trail and crossed it and disappeared into the brush again. For a long time Pepé waited. Far below he could see the little flat and the oak trees and the slash of green. Suddenly his eyes flashed back at the trail again. A quarter of a mile down there had been a quick movement in the chaparral. The rifle swung over. The front sight nestled in the V of the rear sight. Pepé studied for a moment and then raised the rear sight a notch. The little movement in the brush came again. The sight settled on it. Pepé squeezed the trigger. The explosion

crashed down the mountain and up the other side, and came rattling back. The whole side of the slope grew still. No more movement. And then a white streak cut into the granite of the slit and a bullet whined away and a crash sounded up from below. Pepé felt a sharp pain in his right hand. A sliver of granite was sticking out from between his first and second knuckles and the point protruded from his palm. Carefully he pulled out the sliver of stone. The wound bled evenly and gently. No vein nor artery was cut.

Pepé looked into a little dusty cave in the rock and gathered a handful of spider web, and he pressed the mass into the cut, plastering the soft web into the blood. The flow stopped almost at once.

The rifle was on the ground. Pepé picked it up, levered a new shell into the chamber. And then he slid into the brush on his stomach. Far to the right he crawled, and then up the hill, moving slowly and carefully, crawling to cover and resting and then crawling again.

In the mountains the sun is high in its arc before it penetrates the gorges. The hot face looked over the hill and brought instant heat with it. The white light beat on the rocks and reflected from them and rose up quivering from the earth again, and the rocks and bushes seemed to quiver behind the air.

Pepé crawled in the general direction of the ridge peak, zigzagging for cover. The deep cut between his knuckles began to throb. He crawled close to a rattlesnake before he saw it, and when it raised its dry head and made a soft beginning whir, he backed up and took another way. The quick gray lizards flashed in front of him, raising a tiny line of dust. He found another mass of spider web and pressed it against his throbbing hand.

Pepé was pushing the rifle with his left hand now. Little drops of sweat ran to the ends of his coarse black hair and rolled down his cheeks. His lips and tongue were growing thick and heavy. His lips writhed to draw saliva into his mouth. His little dark eyes were uneasy and suspicious. Once when a gray lizard paused in front of him on the parched ground and turned its head sideways he crushed it flat with a stone.

When the sun slid past noon he had not gone a mile. He crawled exhaustedly a last hundred yards to a patch of high sharp manzanita, crawled desperately, and when the patch was reached he wriggled in among the tough gnarly trunks and dropped his head on his left arm. There was little shade in the meager brush, but there was cover and safety. Pepé went to sleep as he lay and the sun beat on his back. A few little birds hopped close to him and peered and hopped away.

Pepé squirmed in his sleep and he raised and dropped his wounded hand again and again.

The sun went down behind the peaks and the cool evening came, and then the dark. A coyote yelled from the hillside. Pepé started awake and looked about with misty eyes. His hand was swollen and heavy; a little thread of pain ran up the inside of his arm and settled in a pocket in his armpit. He peered about and then stood up, for the mountains were black and the moon had not yet risen. Pepé stood up in the dark. The coat of his father pressed on his arm. His tongue was swollen until it nearly filled his mouth. He wriggled out of the coat and dropped it in the brush, and then he struggled up the hill, falling over rocks and tearing his way through the brush. The rifle knocked against stones as he went. Little dry avalanches of gravel and shattered stone went whispering down the hill behind him.

After a while the old moon came up and showed the jagged ridgetop ahead of him. By moonlight Pepé traveled more easily. He bent forward so that his throbbing arm hung away from his body. The journey uphill was made in dashes and rests, a frantic rush up a few yards and then a rest. The wind coasted down the slope rattling the dry stems of the bushes.

The moon was at meridian when Pepé came at last to the sharp backbone of the ridgetop. On the last hundred yards of the rise no soil had clung under the wearing winds. The way was on solid rock. He clambered to the top and looked down on the other side. There was a draw like the last below him, misty with moonlight, brushed with dry struggling sage and chaparral. On the other side the hill rose up sharply and at the top the jagged rotten teeth of the mountain showed against the sky. At the bottom of the cut the brush was thick and dark.

Pepé stumbled down the hill. His throat was almost closed with thirst. At first he tried to run, but immediately he fell and rolled. After that he went more carefully. The moon was just disappearing behind the mountains when he came to the bottom. He crawled into the heavy brush feeling with his fingers for water. There was no water in the bed of the stream, only damp earth. Pepé laid his gun down and scooped up a handful of mud and put it in his mouth, and then he spluttered and scraped the earth from his tongue with his finger, for the mud drew at his mouth like a poultice. He dug a hole in the stream bed with his fingers, dug a little basin to catch water; but before it was very deep his head fell forward on the damp ground and he slept.

The dawn came and the heat of the day fell on the earth, and still Pepé slept. Late in the afternoon his head jerked up. He looked slowly around. His eyes were slits of wariness. Twenty feet away in the heavy brush a big tawny mountain lion stood looking at him. Its long thick tail waved gracefully; its ears were erect with interest, not laid back dangerously. The lion squatted down on its stomach and watched him.

Pepé looked at the hole he had dug in the earth. A half inch of muddy water had collected in the bottom. He tore the sleeve from his hurt arm, with his teeth ripped out a little square, soaked it in the water and put it in his mouth. Over and over he filled the cloth and sucked it.

Still the lion sat and watched him. The evening came down but there was no movement on the hills. No birds visited the dry bottom of the cut. Pepé looked occasionally at the lion. The eyes of the yellow beast drooped as though he were about to sleep. He yawned and his long thin red tongue curled out. Suddenly his head jerked around and his nostrils quivered. His big tail lashed. He stood up and slunk like a tawny shadow into the thick brush.

A moment later Pepé heard the sound, the faint far crash of horses' hoofs on gravel. And he heard something else, a high whining yelp of a dog.

Pepé took his rifle in his left hand and he glided into the brush almost as quietly as the lion had. In the darkening evening he crouched up the hill toward the next ridge. Only when the dark came did he stand up. His energy was short. Once it was dark he fell over the rocks and slipped to his knees on the steep slope, but he moved on and on up the hill, climbing and scrabbling over the broken hillside.

When he was far up toward the top, he lay down and slept for a little while. The withered moon, shining on his face, awakened him. He stood up and moved up the hill. Fifty yards away he stopped and turned back, for he had forgotten his rifle. He walked heavily down and poked about in the brush, but he could not find his gun. At last he lay down to rest. The pocket of pain in his armpit had grown more sharp. His arm seemed to swell out and fall with every heartbeat. There was no position lying down where the heavy arm did not press against his armpit.

With the effort of a hurt beast, Pepé got up and moved again toward the top of the ridge. He held his swollen arm away from his body with his left hand. Up the steep hill he dragged himself, a few steps

and a rest, and a few more steps. At last he was nearing the top. The moon showed the uneven sharp back of it against the sky.

Pepé's brain spun in a big spiral up and away from him. He slumped to the ground and lay still. The rock ridgetop was only a hundred feet above him.

The moon moved over the sky. Pepé half turned on his back. His tongue tried to make words, but only a thick hissing came from between his lips.

When the dawn came, Pepé pulled himself up. His eyes were sane again. He drew his great puffed arm in front of him and looked at the angry wound. The black line ran up from his wrist to his armpit. Automatically he reached in his pocket for the big black knife, but it was not there. His eyes searched the ground. He picked up a sharp blade of stone and scraped at the wound, sawed at the proud flesh and then squeezed the green juice out in big drops. Instantly he threw back his head and whined like a dog. His whole right side shuddered at the pain, but the pain cleared his head.

In the gray light he struggled up the last slope to the ridge and crawled over and lay down behind a line of rocks. Below him lay a deep canyon exactly like the last, waterless and desolate. There was no flat, no oak trees, not even heavy brush in the bottom of it. And on the other side a sharp ridge stood up, thinly brushed with starving sage, littered with broken granite. Strewn over the hill there were giant outcroppings, and on the top the granite teeth stood out against the sky.

The new day was light now. The flame of the sun came over the ridge and fell on Pepé where he lay on the ground. His coarse black hair was littered with twigs and bits of spider web. His eyes had retreated back into his head. Between his lips the tip of his black tongue showed.

He sat up and dragged his great arm into his lap and nursed it, rocking his body and moaning in his throat. He threw back his head and looked up into the pale sky. A big black bird circled nearly out of sight, and far to the left another was sailing near.

He lifted his head to listen, for a familiar sound had come to him from the valley he had climbed out of; it was the crying yelp of hounds, excited and feverish, on a trail.

Pepé bowed his head quickly. He tried to speak rapid words but only a thick hiss came from his lips. He drew a shaky cross on his breast with his left hand. It was a long struggle to get to his feet. He crawled slowly and mechanically to the top of a big rock on the



ridge peak. Once there, he arose slowly, swaying to his feet, and stood erect. Far below he could see the dark brush where he had slept. He braced his feet and stood there, black against the morning sky.

There came a ripping sound at his feet. A piece of stone flew up and a bullet droned off into the next gorge. The hollow crash echoed up from below. Pepé looked down for a moment and then pulled himself straight again.

His body jarred back. His left hand fluttered helplessly toward his breast. The second crash sounded from below. Pepé swung forward and toppled from the rock. His body struck and rolled over and over, starting a little avalanche. And when at last he stopped against a bush, the avalanche slid slowly down and covered up his head.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Find Mama Torres's statement about a boy's becoming a man. Discuss the changes that came over Pepé as a result of the murder. Of what significance is the fact that Pepé chose the manner of his death?
2. Discuss whether it was right for the mother to help Pepé escape.
3. Compare this story and "To Build a Fire." How are they similar in plot structure and in use of detail? Compare the two leading characters. What contrast do you feel between London's attitude toward his character and John Steinbeck's attitude toward Pepé? Read again the first question on "To Build a Fire." Which kind of interest do you have in "Flight"—curiosity or suspense? Enumerate the details by which the author renders the outcome increasingly certain.
4. Vocabulary: aphids, metate, abalones, *tortillas*, jerky, pommel, chaparral, manzanita, poultice.

#### *For Ambitious Students*

5. The play *The Emperor Jones* by Eugene O'Neill tells of another dramatic and terrible flight. Read it and compare the two stories.
6. Read *The Yearling* by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings to find a more extended treatment of the ordeal of growing up.

#### JESSE STUART (1907— )

A product of the Kentucky back country, the first member of his family ever to get a college education, Jesse Stuart has the earnestness and courage to write about his own region and folk and to tell their stories in the simple, colloquial style that is native to them and to him. He wrote his first poems

on pale poplar leaves. He literally fought his own way through school and college, as you may see if you read his autobiography, *Beyond the Dark Hills*, or his first novel, *Trees of Heaven* (1940).

Earnestness is perhaps the outstanding characteristic of this young man; he is too earnest to exploit his locale merely for its picturesqueness. He has expressed his love for the beauty of the dark hills of Kentucky in simple, earthy poems which have caused some critics to hail him as the American Burns. He loves the backward people of the hill country and, feeling himself one of them, seeks to present them in his stories with insight and without distortion. His earnestness shows not only in his writing. A teacher of English in county high schools in Kentucky and Ohio, he says, "I've had nine years of experience with high-school students. If I know anything on earth, it is I do know how to get literature over to them—even the toughest boys. Last year I taught remedial English in Portsmouth High School. I had 'most all the boys on the football team—they never lost a game in Ohio—big boys—two-hundred-pounders. They thought to get a teacher whose poetry had appeared in books and magazines, they'd get a "sissy" or "softie"—they changed their minds. I had those boys reading poetry and stories and loving to do it. I'd read them my stories before I sent them away—they turned out to be my best critics."

Of one of his best stories, "Eustacia," he says, "I wrote a short story about a high-school girl—revised it seven times and sent it thirty-one trips to magazines. The story eventually sold to *Household Magazine* and was selected this year by Edward J. O'Brien for his 1939 collection of *The Best Short Stories*. The story is a struggle for a girl to get an education among the hills of Kentucky—an honest, actual portrait. When I sold the story, I gave the girl the proceeds to enter college—she is in Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, today."

A writer so vigorous, honest, and individual is peculiarly American. Jesse Stuart is a new writer, a very young man still. Remember his name and watch his progress.

### SPLIT CHERRY TREE

In contrast to the carefully plotted and shrewdly integrated stories of most writers, "Split Cherry Tree" will seem to you somewhat formless and loose-jointed. Reading this story is like listening to a storyteller who is propped in the sun against the side of a mountain cabin and whittling away as he drawls; "Split Cherry Tree" is a yarn in the vernacular. Yet it is more than that, too, for in it is revealed Jesse Stuart's sincere interest in the problem of bringing education to the hill people.

"I DON'T mind staying after school," I says to Professor Herbert, "but I'd rather you'd whip me with a switch and let me go home early. Pa will whip me anyway for getting home two hours late."

"You are too big to whip," says Professor Herbert, "and I have to punish you for climbing up in that cherry tree. You boys knew better than that! The other five boys have paid their dollar each. You have been the only one who has not helped to pay for the tree. Can't you borrow a dollar?"

"I can't," I says. "I'll have to take the punishment. I wish it would be quicker punishment. I wouldn't mind."

Professor Herbert stood and looked at me. He was a big man. He wore a gray suit of clothes. The suit matched his gray hair.

"You don't know my father," I says to Professor Herbert. "He might be called a little old-fashioned. He makes us mind him until we're twenty-one years old. He believes: 'If you spare the rod you spoil the child.' I'll never be able to make him understand about the cherry tree. I'm the first of my people to go to high school."

"You must take the punishment," says Professor Herbert. "You must stay two hours after school today and two hours after school tomorrow. I am allowing you twenty-five cents an hour. That is good money for a high-school student. You can sweep the school-house floor, wash the blackboards, and clean windows. I'll pay the dollar for you."

I couldn't ask Professor Herbert to loan me a dollar. He never offered to loan it to me. I had to stay and help the janitor and work out my fine at a quarter an hour.

I thought as I swept the floor, "What will Pa do to me? What lie can I tell him when I go home? Why did we ever climb that cherry tree and break it down for anyway? Why did we run crazy over the hills away from the crowd? Why did we do all of this? Six of us climbed up in a little cherry tree after one little lizard! Why did the tree split and fall with us? It should have been a stronger tree! Why did Eif Crabtree just happen to be below us plowing and catch us in his cherry tree? Why wasn't he a better man than to charge us six dollars for the tree?"

It was six o'clock when I left the schoolhouse. I had six miles to walk home. It would be after seven when I got home. I had all my work to do when I got home. It took Pa and me both to do the work. Seven cows to milk. Nineteen head of cattle to feed, four mules, twenty-five hogs, firewood and stovewood to cut, and water to draw from the well. He would be doing it when I got home. He would be mad and wondering what was keeping me!

I hurried home. I would run under the dark, leafless trees. I would walk fast uphill. I would run down the hill. The ground was freez-

ing. I had to hurry. I had to run. I reached the long ridge that led to our cow pasture. I ran along this ridge. The wind dried the sweat on my face. I ran across the pasture to the house.

I threw down my books in the chipyard. I ran to the barn to spread fodder on the ground for the cattle. I didn't take time to change my clean school clothes for my old work clothes. I ran out to the barn. I saw Pa spreading fodder on the ground to the cattle. That was my job. I ran up to the fence. I says, "Leave that for me, Pa. I'll do it. I'm just a little late."

"I see you are," says Pa. He turned and looked at me. His eyes danced fire. "What in th' world has kept you so? Why ain't you been here to help me with this work? Make a gentleman out'n one boy in th' family and this is what you get! Send you to high school and you get too onery fer th' buzzards to smell!"

I never said anything. I didn't want to tell why I was late from school. Pa stopped scattering the bundles of fodder. He looked at me. He says, "Why are you gettin' in here this time o' night? You tell me or I'll take a hickory withe to you right here on th' spot!"

I says, "I had to stay after school." I couldn't lie to Pa. He'd go to school and find out why I had to stay. If I lied to him it would be too bad for me.

"Why did you haf to stay atter school?" says Pa.

I says, "Our biology class went on a field trip today. Six of us boys broke down a cherry tree. We had to give a dollar apiece to pay for the tree. I didn't have the dollar. Professor Herbert is making me work out my dollar. He gives me twenty-five cents an hour. I had to stay in this afternoon. I'll have to stay in tomorrow afternoon!"

"Are you telling me th' truth?" says Pa.

"I'm telling you the truth," I says. "Go and see for yourself."

"That's just what I'll do in th' mornin'," says Pa. "Jist whose cherry tree did you break down?"

"Eif Crabtree's cherry tree!"

"What was you doin' clear out in Eif Crabtree's place?" says Pa. "He lives four miles from th' county high school. Don't they teach you no books at that high school? Do they jist let you get out and gad over th' hillsides? If that's all they do I'll keep you at home, Dave. I've got work here fer you to do!"

"Pa," I says, "spring is just getting here. We take a subject in school where we have to have bugs, snakes, flowers, lizards, frogs, and plants. It is biology. It was a pretty day today. We went out to

find a few of these. Six of us boys saw a lizard at the same time sunning on a cherry tree. We all went up the tree to get it. We broke the tree down. It split at the forks. Eif Crabtree was plowing down below us. He ran up the hill and got our names. The other boys gave their dollar apiece. I didn't have mine. Professor Herbert put mine in for me. I have to work it out at school."

"Poor man's son, huh," says Pa. "I'll attend to that myself in th' mornin'. I'll take keer o' 'im. He ain't from this county nohow. I'll go down there in th' mornin' and see 'im. Lettin' you leave your books and galavant all over th' hills. What kind of a school is it nohow! Didn't do that, my son, when I's a little shaver in school. All fared alike too."

"Pa, please don't go down there," I says, "just let me have fifty cents and pay the rest of my fine! I don't want you to go down there! I don't want you to start anything with Professor Herbert! "

"Ashamed of your old Pap are you, Dave," says Pa, "atter th' way I've worked to raise you! Tryin' to send you to school so you can make a better livin' than I've made.

"I'll straighten this thing out myself! I'll take keer o' Professor Herbert myself! He ain't got no right to keep you in and let the other boys off jist because they've got th' money! I'm a poor man. A bullet will go in a professor same as it will any man. It will go in a rich man same as it will a poor man. Now you get into this work before I take one o' these withes and cut the shirt off'n your back! "

I thought once I'd run through the woods above the barn just as hard as I could go. I thought I'd leave high school and home forever! Pa could not catch me! I'd get away! I couldn't go back to school with him. He'd have a gun and maybe he'd shoot Professor Herbert. It was hard to tell what he would do. I could tell Pa that school had changed in the hills from the way it was when he was a boy, but he wouldn't understand. I could tell him we studied frogs, birds, snakes, lizards, flowers, insects. But Pa wouldn't understand. If I did run away from home it wouldn't matter to Pa. He would see Professor Herbert anyway. He would think that high school and Professor Herbert had run me away from home. There was no need to run away. I'd just have to stay, finish foddering the cattle, and go to school with Pa the next morning.

I would take a bundle of fodder, remove the hickory witheband from around it, and scatter it on rocks, clumps of green briars, and brush so the cattle wouldn't tramp it under their feet. I would lean it up against the oak trees and the rocks in the pasture just above our

pigpen on the hill. The fodder was cold and frosty where it had set out in the stacks. I would carry bundles of the fodder from the stack until I had spread out a bundle for each steer. Pa went to the barn to feed the mules and throw corn in the pen to the hogs.

The moon shone bright in the cold March sky. I finished my work by moonlight. Professor Herbert really didn't know how much work I had to do at home. If he had known he would not have kept me after school. He would have loaned me a dollar to have paid my part on the cherry tree. He had never lived in the hills. He didn't know the way the hill boys had to work so that they could go to school. Now he was teaching in a county high school where all the boys who attended were from hill farms.

After I'd finished doing my work I went to the house and ate my supper. Pa and Mom had eaten. My supper was getting cold. I heard Pa and Mom talking in the front room. Pa was telling Mom about me staying in after school.

"I had to do all th' milkin' tonight, chop th' wood myself. It's too hard on me att'er I've turned ground all day. I'm goin' to take a day off tomorrow and see if I can't remedy things a little. I'll go down to that high school tomorrow. I won't be a very good scholar fer Professor Herbert nohow. He won't keep me in att'er school. I'll take a different kind of lesson down there and make 'im acquainted with it."

"Now, Luster," says Mom, "you jist stay away from there. Don't cause a lot o' trouble. You can be jailed fer a trick like that. You'll get th' Law att'er you. You'll jist go down there and show off and plague your own boy Dave to death in front o' all th' scholars!"

"Plague or no plague," says Pa, "he don't take into consideration what all I haf to do here, does he? I'll show 'im it ain't right to keep one boy in and let the rest go scot-free. My boy is good as th' rest, ain't he? A bullet will make a hole in a schoolteacher same as it will anybody else. He can't do me that way and get by with it. I'll plug 'im first. I aim to go down there bright and early in the mornin' and get all this straight! I aim to see about bug larnin' and this runnin' all over God's creation huntin' snakes, lizards, and frogs. Ransackin' th' country and goin' through cherry orchards and breakin' th' trees down att'er lizards! Old Eif Crabtree ought to a-poured th' hot lead to 'em instead o' chargin' six dollars fer th' tree! He ought to a-got old Herbert th' first one!"

I ate my supper. I slipped upstairs and lit the lamp. I tried to forget the whole thing. I studied plane geometry. Then I studied my

biology lesson. I could hardly study for thinking about Pa. "He'll go to school with me in the morning. He'll take a gun for Professor Herbert! What will Professor Herbert think of me! I'll tell him when Pa leaves that I couldn't help it. But Pa might shoot him. I hate to go with Pa. Maybe he'll cool off about it tonight and not go in the morning."

Pa got up at four o'clock. He built a fire in the stove. Then he built a fire in the fireplace. He got Mom up to get breakfast. Then he got me up to help feed and milk. By the time we had our work done at the barn, Mom had breakfast ready for us. We ate our breakfast. Daylight came and we could see the bare oak trees covered white with frost. The hills were white with frost. A cold wind was blowing. The sky was clear. The sun would soon come out and melt the frost. The afternoon would be warm with sunshine and the frozen ground would thaw. There would be mud on the hills again. Muddy water would then run down the little ditches on the hills.

"Now, Dave," says Pa, "let's get ready fer school. I aim to go with you this mornin' and look into bug larnin', frog larnin', lizard and snake larnin', and breakin' down cherry trees! I don't like no sicha foolish way o' larnin' myself!"

Pa hadn't forgot. I'd have to take him to school with me. He would take me to school with him. We were going early. I was glad we were going early. If Pa pulled a gun on Professor Herbert there wouldn't be so many of my classmates there to see him.

I knew that Pa wouldn't be at home in the high school. He wore overalls, big boots, a blue shirt and a sheepskin coat and a slouched black hat gone to seed at the top. He put his gun in its holster. We started trudging toward the high school across the hill.

It was early when we got to the county high school. Professor Herbert had just got there. I just thought as we walked up the steps into the schoolhouse, "Maybe Pa will find out Professor Herbert is a good man. He just doesn't know him. Just like I felt toward the Lambert boys across the hill. I didn't like them until I'd seen them and talked to them. After I went to school with them and talked to them, I liked them and we were friends. It's a lot in knowing the other fellow."

"You're th' Professor here, ain't you?" says Pa.

"Yes," says Professor Herbert, "and you are Dave's father."

"Yes," says Pa, pulling out his gun and laying it on the seat in Professor Herbert's office. Professor Herbert's eyes got big behind

his black-rimmed glasses when he saw Pa's gun. Color came into his pale cheeks.

"Jist a few things about this school I want to know," says Pa. "I'm tryin' to make a scholar out'n Dave. He's the only one out'n eleven youngins I've sent to high school. Here he comes in late and leaves me all th' work to do! He said you's all out bug huntin' yesterday and broke a cherry tree down. He had to stay two hours atter school yesterday and work out money to pay on that cherry tree! Is that right?"

"Wwwwy," says Professor Herbert, "I guess it is."

He looked at Pa's gun.

"Well," says Pa, "this ain't no high school. It's a bug school, a lizard school, a snake school! It ain't no school nohow!"

"Why did you bring that gun?" says Professor Herbert to Pa.

"You see that little hole," says Pa as he picked up the long blue forty-four and put his finger on the end of the barrel, "a bullet can come out'n that hole that will kill a schoolteacher same as it will any other man. It will kill a rich man same as a poor man. It will kill a man. But atter I come in and saw you, I know'd I wouldn't need it. This maul o' mine could do you up in a few minutes."

Pa stood there, big, hard, brown-skinned, and mighty beside of Professor Herbert. I didn't know Pa was so much bigger and harder. I'd never seen Pa in a schoolhouse before. I'd seen Professor Herbert. He always looked big before to me. He didn't look big standing beside of Pa.

"I was only doing my duty," says Professor Herbert, "Mr. Sexton, and following the course of study the state provided us with."

"Course o' study," says Pa, "what study, bug study? Varmint study? Takin' youngins to th' woods and their poor old Ma's and Pa's at home a-slavin' to keep 'em in school and give 'em a education! You know that's dangerous, too, puttin' a lot o' boys and girls out together like that!"

Students were coming into the schoolhouse now.

Professor Herbert says, "Close the door, Dave, so others won't hear."

I walked over and closed the door. I was shaking like a leaf in the wind. I thought Pa was going to hit Professor Herbert every minute. He was doing all the talking. His face was getting red. The red color was coming through the brown, weather-beaten skin on Pa's face.



"I was right with these students," says Professor Herbert. "I know what they got into and what they didn't. I didn't send one of the other teachers with them on this field trip. I went myself. Yes, I took the boys and girls together. Why not?"

"It jist don't look good to me," says Pa, "a-takin' all this swarm of youngins out to pillage th' whole deestrect. Breakin' down cherry trees. Keepin' boys in atter school."

"What else could I have done with Dave, Mr. Sexton?" says Professor Herbert. "The boys didn't have any business all climbing that cherry tree after one lizard. One boy could have gone up in the tree and got it. The farmer charged us six dollars. It was a little steep, I think, but we had it to pay. Must I make five boys pay and let your boy off? He said he didn't have the dollar and couldn't get it. So I put it in for him. I'm letting him work it out. He's not working for me. He's working for the school!"

"I jist don't know what you could a-done with 'im," says Pa, "only a-larruped 'im with a withe! That's what he needed!"

"He's too big to whip," says Professor Herbert, pointing at me. "He's a man in size."

"He's not too big fer me to whip," says Pa. "They ain't too big until they're over twenty-one! It jist didn't look fair to me! Work one and let th' rest out because they got th' money. I don't see what bugs has got to do with a high school! It don't look good to me nohow!"

Pa picked up his gun and put it back in its holster. The red color left Professor Herbert's face. He talked more to Pa. Pa softened a little. It looked funny to see Pa in the high-school building. It was the first time he'd ever been there.

"We were not only hunting snakes, toads, flowers, butterflies, lizards," says Professor Herbert, "but, Mr. Sexton, I was hunting dry timothy grass to put in an incubator and raise some protozoa."

"I don't know what that is," says Pa. "Th' incubator is th' new-fangled way o' cheatin' th' hens and raisin' chickens. I ain't so sure about th' breed o' chickens you mentioned."

"You've heard of germs, Mr. Sexton, haven't you?" says Professor Herbert.

"Jist call me Luster, if you don't mind," says Pa, very casual like.

"All right, Luster, you've heard of germs, haven't you?"

"Yes," says Pa, "but I don't believe in germs. I'm sixty-five years old and I ain't seen one yet!"

"You can't see them with your naked eye," says Professor Herbert.

"Just keep that gun in the holster and stay with me in the high school today. I have a few things I want to show you. That scum on your teeth has germs in it."

"What," says Pa, "you mean to tell me I've got germs on my teeth!"

"Yes," says Professor Herbert. "The same kind as we might be able to find in a living black snake if we dissect it!"

"I don't mean to dispute your word," says Pa, "but I don't believe it. I don't believe I have germs on my teeth!"

"Stay with me today and I'll show you. I want to take you through the school anyway! School has changed a lot in the hills since you went to school. I don't guess we had high schools in this county when you went to school!"

"No," says Pa, "jist readin', writin', and cipherin'. We didn't have all this bug larnin', frog larnin', and findin' germs on your teeth and in the middle o' black snakes! Th' world's changin'."

"It is," says Professor Herbert, "and we hope all for the better. Boys like your own there are going to help change it. He's your boy. He knows all of what I've told you. You stay with me today."

"I'll shore stay with you," says Pa. "I want to see th' germs off'n my teeth. I jist want to see a germ. I've never seen one in my life. 'Seein' is believin',' Pap allus told me."

Pa walks out of the office with Professor Herbert. I just hoped Professor Herbert didn't have Pa arrested for pulling his gun. Pa's gun has always been a friend to him when he goes to settle disputes.

The bell rang. School took up. I saw the students when they marched in the schoolhouse look at Pa. They would grin and punch each other. Pa just stood and watched them pass in at the schoolhouse door. Two long lines marched in the house. The boys and girls were clean and well dressed. Pa stood over in the schoolyard under a leafless elm, in his sheepskin coat, his big boots laced in front with buckskin, and his heavy socks stuck above his boot tops. Pa's overalls legs were baggy and wrinkled between his coat and boot tops. His blue work shirt showed at the collar. His big black hat showed his gray-streaked black hair. His face was hard and weather-tanned to the color of a ripe fodder blade. His hands were big and gnarled like the roots of the elm tree he stood beside.

When I went to my first class I saw Pa and Professor Herbert going around over the schoolhouse. I was in my geometry class when Pa and Professor Herbert came in the room. We were explaining our propositions on the blackboard. Professor Herbert and Pa just qui-

etly came in and sat down for awhile. I heard Fred Wurts whisper to Glenn Armstrong, "Who is that old man? Lord, he's a rough-looking scamp." Glenn whispered back, "I think he's Dave's Pap." The students in geometry looked at Pa. They must have wondered what he was doing in school. Before the class was over, Pa and Professor Herbert got up and went out. I saw them together down on the playground. Professor Herbert was explaining to Pa. I could see the prints of Pa's gun under his coat when he'd walk around.

At noon in the high-school cafeteria Pa and Professor Herbert sat together at the little table where Professor Herbert always ate by himself. They ate together. The students watched the way Pa ate. He ate with his knife instead of his fork. A lot of the students felt sorry for me after they found out he was my father. They didn't have to feel sorry for me. I wasn't ashamed of Pa after I found out he wasn't going to shoot Professor Herbert. I was glad they had made friends. I wasn't ashamed of Pa. I wouldn't be as long as he behaved. He would find out about the high school as I had found out about the Lambert boys across the hill.

In the afternoon when we went to biology Pa was in the class. He was sitting on one of the high stools beside the microscope. We went ahead with our work just as if Pa wasn't in the class. I saw Pa take his knife and scrape tartar from one of his teeth. Professor Herbert put it on the lens and adjusted the microscope for Pa. He adjusted it and worked awhile. Then he says: "Now Luster, look! Put your eye right down to the light. Squint the other eye!"

Pa put his head down and did as Professor Herbert said. "I see 'im," says Pa. "Who'd a ever thought that? Right on a body's teeth! Right in a body's mouth. You're right certain they ain't no fake to this, Professor Herbert?"

"No, Luster," says Professor Herbert. "It's there. That's the germ. Germs live in a world we cannot see with the naked eye. We must use the microscope. There are millions of them in our bodies. Some are harmful. Others are helpful."

Pa holds his face down and looks through the microscope. We stop and watch Pa. He sits upon the tall stool. His knees are against the table. His legs are long. His coat slips up behind when he bends over. The handle of his gun shows. Professor Herbert pulls his coat down quickly.

"Oh, yes," says Pa. He gets up and pulls his coat down. Pa's face gets a little red. He knows about his gun and he knows he doesn't have any use for it in high school.

"We have a big black snake over here we caught yesterday," says Professor Herbert. "We'll chloroform him and dissect him and show you he has germs in his body, too."

"Don't do it," says Pa. "I believe you. I jist don't want to see you kill the black snake. I never kill one. They are good mousers and a lot o' help to us on the farm. I like black snakes. I jist hate to see people kill 'em. I don't allow 'em killed on my place."

The students look at Pa. They seem to like him better after he said that. Pa with a gun in his pocket but a tender heart beneath his ribs for snakes, but not for man! Pa won't whip a mule at home. He won't whip his cattle.

"Man can defend hisself," says Pa, "but cattle and mules can't. We have the drop on 'em. Ain't nothin' to a man that'll beat a good pullin' mule. He ain't got th' right kind o' a heart!"

Professor Herbert took Pa through the laboratory. He showed him the different kinds of work we were doing. He showed him our equipment. They stood and talked while we worked. Then they walked out together. They talked louder when they got out in the hall.

When our biology class was over I walked out of the room. It was our last class for the day. I would have to take my broom and sweep two hours to finish paying for the split cherry tree. I just wondered if Pa would want me to stay. He was standing in the hallway watching the students march out. He looked lost among us. He looked like a leaf turned brown on the tree among the treetop filled with growing leaves.

I got my broom and started to sweep. Professor Herbert walked up and says, "I'm going to let you do that some other time. You can go home with your father. He is waiting out there."

I laid my broom down, got my books, and went down the steps.

Pa says, "Ain't you got two hours o' sweepin' yet to do?"

I says, "Professor Herbert said I could do it some other time. He said for me to go home with you."

"No," says Pa. "You are goin' to do as he says. He's a good man. School has changed from my day and time. I'm a dead leaf, Dave. I'm behind. I don't belong here. If he'll let me I'll get a broom and we'll both sweep one hour. That pays your debt. I'll hep you pay it. I'll ast 'im and see if he won't let me hep you."

"I'm going to cancel the debt," says Professor Herbert. "I just wanted you to understand, Luster."

"I understand," says Pa, "and since I understand he must pay his debt fer th' tree and I'm goin' to hep 'im."

"Don't do that," says Professor Herbert. "It's all on me."

"We don't do things like that," says Pa, "we're just and honest people. We don't want somethin' fer nothin'. Professor Herbert, you're wrong now and I'm right. You'll haf to listen to me. I've larned a lot from you. My boy must go on. Th' world has left me. It changed while I've raised my family and plowed th' hills. I'm a just and honest man. I don't skip debts. I ain't larned 'em to do that. I ain't got much larnin' myself but I do know right from wrong attar I see through a thing."

Professor Herbert went home. Pa and I stayed and swept one hour. It looked funny to see Pa use a broom. He never used one at home. Mom used the broom. Pa used the plow. Pa did hard work. Pa says, "I can't sweep. Durned if I can. Look at th' streaks o' dirt I leave on th' floor! Seems like no work a-tall fer me. Brooms is too light 'r somethin'. I'll jist do th' best I can, Dave. I've been wrong about th' school."

I says, "Did you know Professor Herbert can get a warrant out for you for bringing your pistol to school and showing it in his office! They can railroad you for that!"

"That's all made right," says Pa. "I've made that right. Professor Herbert ain't goin' to take it to court. He likes me. I like 'im. We jist had to get together. He had the remedies. He showed me. You must go on to school. I am as strong a man as ever come out'n th' hills fer my years and th' hard work I've done. But I'm behind, Dave. I'm a little man. Your hands will be softer than mine. Your clothes will be better. You'll allus look cleaner than your old Pap. Jist remember, Dave, to pay your debts and be honest. Jist be kind to animals and don't bother th' snakes. That's all I got agin th' school. Puttin' black snakes to sleep and cuttin' 'em open."

It was late when we got home. Stars were in the sky. The moon was up. The ground was frozen. Pa took his time going home. I couldn't run like I did the night before. It was ten o'clock before we got the work finished, our suppers eaten. Pa sat before the fire and told Mom he was going to take her and show her a germ sometime. Mom hadn't seen one either. Pa told her about the high school and the fine man Professor Herbert was. He told Mom about the strange school across the hill and how different it was from the school in their day and time.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Turn to page 54 and reread the section called "Formlessness in the Modern Short Story." To get the flavor of Jesse Stuart's style, read half a dozen paragraphs aloud. What do you notice about the diction and the sentences? Does his style seem natural or artificial?
2. Why was Pa so unjust to the school before he went to visit it? What is the remedy for most faulty, emotional reasoning? Discuss the shrewdness of the principal in his handling of Pa. How does the story support Pa's contention that he is "a just and honest man"?
3. Cite passages in this story which show that Jesse Stuart believes in education for the hill people.
4. Show that the setting furnishes the central impression of this story. What details make this story vivid and seemingly real? What convinces you that these details are true to Kentucky hill-country life?
5. Review the details of different regions of our country given in the stories in this book. Which of these regions were new to you? which were made most vivid? which would you most like to visit?

*For Ambitious Students*

6. Find out about Berea College in Kentucky and tell the class.
7. Write a composition in which you try to present life in some region as vividly as does this story.

## MAUREEN DALY (1922— )

Unquestionably the United States has produced some of the world's finest short stories, and the roster of names from Washington Irving to Jesse Stuart is a list to make Americans proud. But even the humblest of us are storytellers; and one of the sources of student interest in the short story as a type is that students, too, write short stories, and sometimes very good ones. So to complete this section, we are presenting a student's story — a story written by a high-school girl in Fond du Lac, Michigan. Maureen Daly was only sixteen when she wrote this story and submitted it to *Scholastic Magazine*, where it won the National High School Short Story Contest in 1938; but, though only sixteen, she had learned the most important principle of good writing: Cultivate awareness of your own surroundings and write about things you understand.

## SIXTEEN

NOW DON'T get me wrong. I mean, I want you to understand from the beginning that I'm not really so dumb. I know what a girl should do and what she shouldn't. I get around. I read. I listen to the radio. And I have two older sisters. So you see, I know what the score is. I know it's smart to wear tweedish skirts and shaggy sweaters with the sleeves pushed up and pearls and ankle socks and saddle shoes that look as if they've seen the world. And I know that your hair should be long, almost to your shoulders, and sleek as a wet seal, just a little fluffed on the ends, and you should wear a campus hat or a dink or else a peasant hankie if you've got that sort of face. Properly, a peasant hankie should make you think of edelweiss, mist and sunny mountains, yodeling and Swiss cheese. You know, that kind of peasant. Now, me, I never wear a hankie. It makes my face seem wide and Slavic and I look like a picture always in one of those magazine articles that run — "And Stalin says the future of Russia lies in its women. In its women who have tilled its soil, raised its children —" Well, anyway. I'm not exactly too small-town either. I read Winchell's column. You get to know what New York boy is that way about some pineapple princess on the West Coast and what Paradise pretty is currently the prettiest, and why someone, eventually, will play Scarlett O'Hara. It gives you that cosmopolitan feeling. And I know that anyone who orders a strawberry sundae in a drugstore instead of a lemon coke would probably be dumb enough to wear colored ankle socks with high-heeled pumps or use Evening in Paris with a tweed suit. But I'm sort of drifting. This isn't what I wanted to tell you. I just wanted to give you the general idea of how I'm not so dumb. It's important that you understand that.

You see, it was funny how I met him. It was a winter night like any other winter night. And I didn't have my Latin done, either. But the way the moon tinsel the twigs and silver-plated the snowdrifts, I just couldn't stay inside. The skating rink isn't far from our house — you can make it in five minutes if the sidewalks aren't slippery — so I went skating. I remember it took me a long time to get ready that night because I had to darn my skating socks first. I don't know why they always wear out so fast — just in the toes, too. Maybe it's because I have metal protectors on the toes of my skates. That probably is why. And then I brushed my hair — hard,

so hard it clung to my hand and stood up around my head in a hazy halo.

My skates were hanging by the back door all nice and shiny, for I'd just gotten them for Christmas and they smelled so queer — just like fresh smoked ham. My dog walked with me as far as the corner. She's a red chow, very polite and well mannered, and she kept pretending it was me she liked when all the time I knew it was the ham smell. She panted along beside me and her hot breath made a frosty little balloon balancing on the end of her nose. My skates thumped me good-naturedly on my back as I walked and the night was breathlessly quiet and the stars winked down like a million flirting eyes. It was all so lovely.

It was all so lovely I ran most of the way and it was lucky the sidewalks had ashes on them or I'd have slipped surely. The ashes crunched like crackerjack and I could feel their cindery shape through the thinness of my shoes. I always wear old shoes when I go skating.

I had to cut across someone's back garden to get to the rink and last summer's grass stuck through the thin ice, brown and discouraged. Not many people came through this way and the crusted snow broke through the little hollows between corn stubbles frozen hard in the ground. I was out of breath when I got to the shanty — out of breath with running and with the loveliness of the night. Shanties are always such friendly places. The floor all hacked to wet splinters from skate runners and the wooden wall frescoed with symbols of dead romance. There was a smell of singed wool as someone got too near the glowing isinglass grin of the iron stove. Girls burst through the door laughing, with snow on their hair, and tripped over shoes scattered on the floor. A pimply-faced boy grabbed the hat from the frizzled head of an eighth-grade blonde and stuffed it into an empty galosh to prove his love and then hastily bent to examine his skate strap with innocent unconcern.

It didn't take me long to get my own skates on and I stuck my shoes under the bench — far back where they wouldn't get knocked around and would be easy to find when I wanted to go home. I walked out on my toes and the shiny runners of my new skates dug deep into the sodden floor.\*

It was snowing a little outside — quick, eager little Luxlike flakes that melted as soon as they touched your hand. I don't know where the snow came from, for there were stars out. Or maybe the stars were in my eyes and I just kept seeing them every time I looked up into the darkness. I waited a moment. You know, to start to skate at a



crowded rink is like jumping on a moving merry-go-round. The skaters go skimming round in a colored blur like gaudy painted horses and the shrill musical jabber re-echoes in the night from a hundred human calliopes. Once in, I went all right. At least after I found out exactly where that rough ice was. It was "round, round, jump the rut, round, round, round, jump the rut, round, round —"

And then he came. All of a sudden his arm was around my waist so warm and tight and he said very casually, "Mind if I skate with you?" and then he took my other hand. That's all there was to it. Just that and then we were skating. It wasn't that I'd never skated with a boy before. Don't be silly. I told you before I get around. But this was different. He was a smoothie! He was a big shot up at school and he went to all the big dances and he was the best dancer in town except Harold Wright, who didn't count because he'd been to college in New York for two years! Don't you see? This was different.

I can't remember what we talked about at first; I can't even remember if we talked at all. We just skated and skated and laughed every time we came to that rough spot and pretty soon we were laughing all the time at nothing at all. It was all so lovely.

Then we sat on the big snowbank at the edge of the rink and just watched. It was cold at first even with my skating pants on, sitting on that hard heap of snow, but pretty soon I got warm all over. He threw a handful of snow at me and it fell in a little white shower on my hair and he leaned over to brush it off. I held my breath. The night stood still.

The moon hung just over the warming shanty like a big quarter slice of muskmelon and the smoke from the pipe chimney floated up in a sooty fog. One by one the houses around the rink twinkled out their lights and somebody's hound wailed a mournful apology to a star as he curled up for the night. It was all so lovely.

Then he sat up straight and said, "We'd better start home." Not "Shall I take you home?" or "Do you live far?" but "We'd better start home." See, that's how I know he wanted to take me home. Not because he *had* to but because he *wanted* to. He went to the shanty to get my shoes. "Black ones," I told him. "Same size as Garbo's." And he laughed again. He was still smiling when he came back and took off my skates and tied the wet skate strings in a soggy knot and put them over his shoulder. Then he held out his hand and I slid off the snowbank and brushed off the seat of my pants and we were ready.

It was snowing harder now. Big, quiet flakes that clung to twiggy bushes and snuggled in little drifts against the tree trunks. The night was an etching in black and white. It was all so lovely I was sorry I lived only a few blocks away. He talked softly as we walked, as if every little word were a secret. "Did I like Wayne King, and did I plan to go to college next year, and had I a cousin who lived in Appleton and knew his brother?" A very respectable Emily Post sort of conversation, and then finally "how nice I looked with snow in my hair and had I ever seen the moon so — close?" For the moon was following us as we walked and ducking playfully behind a chimney every time I turned to look at it. And then we were home.

The porch light was on. My mother always puts the porch light on when I go away at night. And we stood there a moment by the front steps and the snow turned pinkish in the glow of the colored light and a few feathery flakes settled on his hair. Then he took my skates and put them over my shoulder and said, "Good night now. I'll call you." "I'll call you," he said.

I went inside then and in a moment he was gone. I watched him from my window as he went down the street. He was whistling softly and I waited until the sound faded away so I couldn't tell if it was he or my heart whistling out there in the night. And then he was gone, completely gone.

I shivered. Somehow the darkness seemed changed. The stars were little hard chips of light far up in the sky and the moon stared down with a sullen yellow glare. The air was tense with sudden cold and a gust of wind swirled his footprints into white oblivion. Everything was quiet.

But he'd said, "I'll call you." That's what he said — "I'll call you." I couldn't sleep all night.

And that was last Thursday. Tonight is Tuesday. Tonight is Tuesday and my homework's done, and I darned some stockings that didn't really need it, and I worked a crossword puzzle, and I listened to the radio, and now I'm just sitting. I'm just sitting because I can't think of anything else to do. I can't think of anything, anything but snowflakes and ice skates and yellow moons and Thursday night. The telephone is sitting on the corner table with its old black face turned to the wall so I can't see its leer. I don't even jump when it rings any more. My heart still prays, but my mind just laughs. Outside the night is still, so still I think I'll go crazy, and the white snow's all dirtied and smoked into grayness and the wind is blowing the arc light so it throws weird, waving shadows from

the trees onto the lawn — like thin, starved arms begging for I don't know what. And so I'm just sitting here and I'm not feeling anything; I'm not even sad, because all of a sudden I know. All of a sudden I know. I can sit here now forever and laugh and laugh and laugh while the tears run salty in the corners of my mouth. For all of a sudden I know, I know what the stars knew all the time — he'll never, never call — never.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. By her title Miss Daly says that here is a picture of life as it is lived by a girl of sixteen. What is the distinguishing quality of youth in her story? What other story in this book makes this same point?
2. How does the first paragraph inspire the reader's confidence?
3. Name the four different moods the girl experiences. Show that the description of scene is in key with each of these moods.
4. Pick out passages of effective description which show Maureen Daly's ability to observe and appreciate her environment. Cite several apt comparisons.
5. Can you remember something that you wanted desperately to have happen although it might seem a trifle to your elders? Try writing of your experience as simply and frankly as this girl writes of hers. Or perhaps you would like to tell this same incident from the boy's point of view.

### SHORT STORY READING LIST

#### WHERE TO FIND AMERICAN SHORT STORIES

The following collections assemble outstanding stories in convenient form. Many of the stories by individual authors mentioned below are to be found in these, and also in collections not limited to American stories.

Atlantic Monthly Press, *Modern Atlantic Stories*

Becker, M. L., ed., *Golden Tales of Our America; Stories of Our Background and Tradition; Golden Tales of the Old South; Golden Tales of the Prairie States; Golden Tales of the Far West; Golden Tales of the Southwest*

Fagin, N. B., *America through the Short Story*

Goodman, Henry, ed., *Creating the Short Story, a Symposium Anthology*

Hansen, Harry, ed., *O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories of 1935*

Heydrick, Benjamin, ed., *Americans All*

Howells, W. D., ed., *The Great American Short Stories; Great Modern American Stories*

Jessup, Alexander, ed., *Representative American Short Stories; The Best American Humorous Stories; Representative Modern Short Stories*

- O'Brien, E. J., ed., *The Best Short Stories of 1915*, and so on, a series of annual volumes made up of selections chosen from American magazines by O'Brien; *Best Short Stories*, and the *Yearbook of the American Short Story*; *Modern American Short Stories*; *50 Best American Short Stories, 1915-1939*
- Pattee, F. L., ed., *Century Readings in the American Short Story*; *American Short Stories*
- Post Stories of 1937*; *Post Stories of 1938* (stories from the *Saturday Evening Post*)
- Williams, B. C., ed., *O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories of 1919*, and so on, a series of annual volumes similar to E. J. O'Brien's; *Great American Short Stories*; *O. Henry Memorial Prize Winning Stories*
- Wood, W. R., and Husband, J. D., eds., *Short Stories As You Like Them* (a collection of *short* short stories by American authors)

In case of trouble in finding a given story, you can always consult the *Index to Short Stories* compiled by Ina Ten Eyck Firkins. This gives the place of original publication and every other work in which a given story may be found. All libraries have this volume. A comprehensive history of the American short story is *The Development of the American Short Story* by F. L. Pattee.

Following is a recommended list of American short stories. Italicized titles are those of volumes of short stories, and often also of the first story in the volume.

- Aldrich, T. B., *Marjorie Daw and Other Stories*; *Two Bites of a Cherry*
- Allen, J. L., *Flute and Violin*; "King Solomon of Kentucky"; "Two Gentlemen of Kentucky"
- Andrews, M. R. S., "The Counsel Assigned"; "The Three Things"; "The Perfect Tribute"; "American, Sir!"
- Bacon, J. D., "Edgar, the Choir Boy Uncelestial"
- Benét, S. V., *Tales before Midnight*; *Thirteen o'Clock*
- Bercovici, Konrad, *Ghitza*
- Bierce, Ambrose, *In the Midst of Life*
- Biggers, E. D., *Earl Derr Biggers Tells Ten Stories*
- Brown, Alice, *Meadow Grass*; *Tiverton Tales*; *The Flying Teuton*
- Buck, Pearl, "The Good River"; "A Rainy Day"; "Wang Lung"; "Father Andrea"; "The Old Mother"
- Bunner, H. C., *Short Sixes*; "A Sisterly Scheme"; "The Love Letters of Smith"; "The Tenor"; "The Nice People"; "Zenobia's Infidelity"
- Butler, E. P., *The Behind Legs of the 'Orse, and Other Stories*; *Ghosts What Ain't*; *Goat Feathers*; *Pups and Pies*; *Pigs Is Pigs!*
- Cable, G. W., *Old Creole Days*; "Jean-ah-Poquelin"; "Posson Jone"; "Tite Poulette"; "Madame Delphine"
- Cather, Willa, *Obscure Destinies*; *Youth and the Bright Medusa*
- Clemens, S. L. (Mark Twain), "The Jumping Frog"; "A Dog Story"
- Cobb, I. S., *The Escape of Mr. Trimm*; "The Belled Buzzard"; *Back*

- Home* (stories of Old Judge Priest); *Down Yonder with Judge Priest and Irvin S. Cobb*
- Cohen, O. R., *Polished Ebony; Come Seven; Black and Blue*
- Connell, Richard, *The Sin of Monsieur Pettipon; Apes and Angels; Variety*
- Connolly, J. B., *Out of Gloucester; Deep Waters*
- Craddock, C. E. (Mary N. Murfree), *In the Tennessee Mountains*
- Davis, R. H., *The Bar Sinister; Gallegher; Ranson's Folly; Van Bibber and Others*
- Deland, Margaret, *Old Chester Tales; Dr. Lavendar's People*
- Dreiser, Theodore, "The Lost Phoebe"
- Edmonds, W. D., *Rome Haul*
- Ferber, Edna, *Cheerful* — by Request; *Roast Beef Medium; Mother Knows Best*
- Fisher, D. C., *Hillsboro People; Home Fires in France; Made-to-Order Stories; The Real Motive*
- Fitch, G. H., *At Good Old Siwash*
- Freeman, M. E. W., *A New England Nun; A Humble Romance; Wind in the Rosebush; Best Stories of Mary E. Wilkins*, ed. by H. W. Lanier
- Gale, Zona, *Friendship Village; Old-Fashioned Tales*
- Garland, Hamlin, *Main-Traveled Roads; Other Main-Traveled Roads*
- Hale, E. E., "The Man without a Country"; "My Double and How He Undid Me"
- Harris, J. C., *Uncle Remus Stories*; "The Wonderful Tar Baby"; "How a Witch Was Caught"; "The Creature with No Claws"
- Harte, Bret, *The Luck of Roaring Camp*; "An Ingénue of the Sierras"; "Tennessee's Partner"; "The Postmistress of Laurel Run"; "Left Out on Lone Star Mountain"; "M'liss"; "How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar"
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *Twice-Told Tales; Mosses from an Old Manse; The Snow Image*
- Heyward, Du Bose, "The Half-Pint Flask"
- Hurst, Fannie, *Humoresque; Every Soul Hath Its Song; Gaslight Sonatas*
- Irving, Washington, *The Alhambra; Tales of a Traveler*; "Rip Van Winkle"; "The Specter Bridegroom"; "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow"; "The Stout Gentleman"
- James, Henry, "The Real Thing"; *Daisy Miller*
- Jewett, S. O., *A White Heron; A Native of Winby; Best Stories of Sarah Orne Jewett*, ed. by Willa Cather
- Johnson, Owen, *The Tennessee Shad*
- Kelly, Myra, *Little Citizens; Little Aliens*
- La Farge, Oliver, *All the Young Men*
- Lardner, Ring, *Round Up*
- Lewis, Sinclair, "Let's Play King"; "The Willow Walk"; "Land"; "A Letter from the Queen"; "Young Man Axelbrod"
- Lincoln, J. C., *Back Numbers*

- London, Jack, *Tales of the Fish Patrol; The Faith of Men; Children of the Frost; Lost Face; Moon-Face; The Son of the Wolf*
- Marshall, Edison, "The Elephant Remembers"; "The Heart of Little Shikara"
- Montague, M. P., *England to America; Uncle Sam of Freedom Ridge; Closed Doors; Up Eel River*
- O'Brien, Fitz-James, "The Diamond Lens"; "What Was It?"
- Page, T. N., *In Ole Virginia; Marse Chan*
- Parker, Dorothy, *Here Lies*
- Poe, E. A., "The Black Cat"; "The Tell-Tale Heart"; "A Descent into the Maelstrom"; "The Fall of the House of Usher"; "The Gold Bug"; "MS. Found in a Bottle"; "The Masque of the Red Death"; "Murders in the Rue Morgue"; "The Oblong Box"; "The Oval Portrait"; "The Pit and the Pendulum"; "The Purloined Letter"
- Porter, W. S. (O. Henry), *The Four Million; The Heart of the West; Roads of Destiny; Whirligigs; The Voice of the City; Sixes and Sevens; Cabbages and Kings; The Gentle Grafter*
- Rinehart, M. R., *Tish Marches On*
- Roberts, C. D. G., *Eyes of the Wilderness*
- Singmaster, Elsie, *Bred in the Bone; Gettysburg*; "November the Nineteenth"; "July the First"
- Smith, E. V., "Lijah"; "Prelude"
- Smith, F. H., *Forty Minutes Late; A Gentleman Vagabond; The Other Fellow*
- Steele, W. D., "Land's End"; "White Horse Winter"; "Down on Their Knees"; "The Yellow Cat"; "Blue Murder"; "Autumn Bloom"; "Lightning"; "Sooth"; "Luck"; "Sailor! Sailor!"
- Steinbeck, John, *The Red Pony; The Long Valley*
- Stockton, F. R., *The Lady or the Tiger? and Other Stories*
- Stuart, Jesse, "Eustacia"; "Brothers"; "Three Hundred Acres of Elbow Room"
- Stuart, R. McE., *Sonny; A Golden Wedding*
- Suckow, Ruth, *Country People; Iowa Interiors; Children and Older People*
- Van Dyke, Henry, *The Blue Flower; The Ruling Passion; Half-Told Tales; The Unknown Quantity; The Other Wise Man*
- Wharton, Edith, *Xingu and Other Stories; Certain People; Tales of Men and Ghosts*
- White, S. E., *Blazed Trail Stories; Arizona Nights; The Two-Gun Man*
- White, W. A., *The Court of Boyville; In Our Town; The Real Issue*
- Williams, B. A., *Thrifty Stock*; "Sheener"; "They Grind Exceeding Small"; "One Crowded Hour"
- Wister, Owen, *Red Men and White; When West Was West*; "Philosophy Four"
- Wood, F. G., "Shoes"; "Turkey Red"
- Yeziarska, Anzia, *Children of Loneliness; Hungry Hearts*

*Guide to the Novel*

WHILE READING the short stories in this volume, you must not forget the other great branch of fiction — the novel. Since the length of novels forbids their adequate representation in a general collection, it is recommended that you read outside of class at least one, and as many more as you can, from the list of novels on pages 247-50. For your outside reading in the novel your teacher will probably wish you to make either an oral or a written report to him or to the class. For these reports he may have a particular scheme or outline, for which he will give you specific instructions. Or, perhaps, you will be given a free rein to make any sort of report that you desire. If you are left to your own devices, you may find the following brief suggestions helpful.

First of all, decide what you are trying to do with your report. If you liked the book, you may wish to "sell" it to the class — to get as many as possible of your classmates to read it. If this is your purpose, be sure not to spoil the story for them by revealing too much. Another type of report is intended to save others the trouble of reading the book; you tell them so much about the story that they feel familiar with it and need investigate it no further. Still a third purpose in reporting on a novel is to discuss its theme. In this case you use the book as a starting point and draw material not only from this story but from other books and from your personal experiences. Probably the most mature purpose for a book report is to give a critical evaluation of the book; that is, to attempt to tell what merit the book has and what gives it this merit. If you wish to try your hand at a critical report, perhaps you can use one of the two following procedures:

1. Open with a brief statement of the author's position in the history of our literature: when he lived, where he lived, what sort of reputation he has as a writer. Next, place the particular book you have read by telling whether it is one of the author's early or later books and whether it is considered one of his best. You might mention a few of his other books.

Then make the main part of your report an answer to these three questions: What was the author's purpose in writing the story? How well did he succeed in carrying out his purpose? How worthy was his purpose? Fortify each point that you make by citing incidents or quotations from the book.

Among the many purposes for writing novels are the following: to give the reader an escape from reality by means of a thrilling vicarious adventure; to entertain by humorous incident or character; to present a picture of life and thought at some given place at a given time; to present a psychological study of some specific character; to teach some great truth; to present propaganda for a cause; to satirize some situation or some group. If you make many reports of this nature, you may find some value in noting the purpose of the novels you most enjoy. When you can find true enjoyment in the novel of character or of theme, you have become much more mature than you were when your chief enjoyment was merely in a thrilling plot.

2. Since novels, like short stories, are made up of action, characters, and setting, you might, after identifying the author, report on one of these elements, or each of them in turn, using the questions suggested for the short story on pages 55-59. In this kind of report, as in the one suggested first, you should be careful to cite material from the book to justify your various estimates.

Novels are usually more complicated in plot structure than are short stories. If you find several subplots, you might point out their interrelations and state just how each subplot contributes to the author's purpose. Sometimes a subplot is included to present a situation in contrast to the main plot, or perhaps merely to give variety. In discussing the plot, give some attention to the outcome. Did it please you? If it did not, examine your reaction carefully to discover whether a happy ending is more important to you than the feeling that the book is true to life and character.

Even more than the short story, the novel takes you into the experience of other human beings; for instead of glimpsing only brief, significant periods in their lives, you often follow them through a lifetime of development and come to feel that you have known them intimately. In discussing the characters, note particularly how any character develops or changes as the story advances. Try to decide whether the change grows logically out of the given situation and characters.

#### NOVELS FOR HOME READING

(Some authors appear under more than one heading)

##### GOOD ENTERTAINMENT: THRILLS, LAUGHS, AND TEARS

Allen, J. L., *A Kentucky Cardinal*

Burnett, F. H., *T. Tembarom*



Davis, R. H., *Soldiers of Fortune*

Johnson, Owen, *The Varmint*

Stockton, F. R., *The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine; Rudder Grange; The Adventures of Captain Horn*

Tarkington, Booth, *Seventeen; The Plutocrat*

Twain, Mark, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer; The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Westcott, E. N., *David Harum*

Wilson, H. L., *Merton of the Movies*

#### HISTORICAL NOVELS WITH FOREIGN SETTINGS

Buck, Pearl, *House of Earth* (trilogy including *The Good Earth*)

Crawford, F. M., *In the Palace of the King; Via Crucis*

Davis, W. S., *A Friend of Caesar; The Victor of Salamis; The Beauty of the Purple; The Whirlwind*

Nordhoff, C. B., and Hall, J. N., *Mutiny on the Bounty; Men against the Sea; Pitcairn's Island; The Hurricane*

Tarkington, Booth, *Monsieur Beaucaire* (novelette)

Twain, Mark, *The Prince and the Pauper; A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*

Wallace, Lew, *Ben Hur*

#### THE STORY OF AMERICA

##### *Colonial Days*

Bacheller, Irving, *A Candle in the Wilderness; In the Days of Poor Richard*

Cather, Willa, *Shadows on the Rock* (Quebec)

Cooper, J. F., *The Deerslayer; The Pioneers; The Last of the Mohicans*

Field, Rachel, *Calico Bush*

Johnston, Mary, *To Have and To Hold; Croatan; The Great Valley; Prisoners of Hope; The Slave Ship*

Lovelace, M. H., *Charming Sally*

Roberts, Kenneth, *Northwest Passage*

Simms, W. G., *The Yemassee*

##### *The Revolution*

Atherton, Gertrude, *The Conqueror*

Boyd, James, *Drums*

Churchill, Winston, *Richard Carvel*

Cooper, J. F., *The Pilot; The Spy*

Edmonds, W. D., *Drums along the Mohawk*

Ford, P. L., *Janice Meredith*

Mitchell, S. W., *Hugh Wynne, Free Quaker*

Roberts, Kenneth, *Arundel; Rabble in Arms; Captain Caution; Oliver Wiswell*

Thompson, Maurice, *Alice of Old Vincennes*

*From the Revolution to the War between the States*

Babcock, Bernie, *The Soul of Ann Rutledge; Little Abe Lincoln*  
Cather, Willa, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*  
Churchill, Winston, *The Crossing*  
Eggleston, Edward, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*  
Hergesheimer, Joseph, *Java Head*  
Hough, Emerson, *The Covered Wagon*  
Jackson, H. H., *Ramona*  
Lovelace, M. H., *Early Candlelight*  
Melville, Herman, *Moby Dick; Typee*  
Roberts, E. M., *The Great Meadow*  
Twain, Mark, and Warner, C. D., *The Gilded Age*  
White, S. E., *Gold; Long Rifle; The Gray Dawn*

*The War between the States and Reconstruction*

Bacheller, Irving, *Eben Holden; A Man for the Ages*  
Boyd, James, *Marching On*  
Churchill, Winston, *The Crisis*  
Crane, Stephen, *The Red Badge of Courage*  
Fox, J., *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come*  
Hergesheimer, Joseph, *The Limestone Tree*  
Johnston, Mary, *The Long Roll*  
Kantor, McKinlay, *Arouse and Beware; Long Remember*  
Mitchell, Margaret, *Gone with the Wind*  
Trowbridge, J. T., *Cudjo's Cave*  
Young, S., *So Red the Rose*

*The Later Frontier and the Rise of Industry*

Aldrich, B. S., *A Lantern in Her Hand*  
Atherton, Gertrude, *Senator North*  
Cather, Willa, *My Antonia; O Pioneers!*  
Churchill, Winston, *Coniston*  
Ertz, Susan, *The Proselyte*  
Fairbank, J. A., *Bright Land*  
Ferber, Edna, *Cimarron; Come and Get It; Show Boat*  
Ford, P. L., *The Honorable Peter Stirling*  
Garland, Hamlin, *Trail-Makers of the Middle Border*  
Norris, Frank, *The Octopus; The Pit*  
Rölvaa, O. E., *Giants in the Earth*  
White, S. E., *The Blazed Trail; The River Man*  
White, W. A., *A Certain Rich Man*  
Wister, Owen, *The Virginian*

*Modern American Life (Twentieth Century)*

Adams, S. H., *Revelry*  
 Barnes, M. A., *Years of Grace; Within This Present*  
 Boyd, Thomas, *Through the Wheat*  
 Carroll, G. H., *As the Earth Turns*  
 Cather, Willa, *One of Ours*  
 Fairbank, J. A., *Lion's Den; Rich Man, Poor Man*  
 Hurst, Fannie, *A President Is Born*  
 Huston, McCready, *Dear Senator*  
 Kyne, Peter B., *They Also Serve*  
 Lawrence, Josephine, *If I Have Four Apples*  
 Lewis, Sinclair, *Main Street; Babbitt; It Can't Happen Here*  
 Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan, *The Yearling*  
 Stribling, T. S., *Unfinished Cathedral*  
 Tarkington, Booth, *The Magnificent Ambersons*  
 Vorse, Mary, *Strike*  
 Whitlock, Brand, *Big Matt*

The novels in the last section tend to emphasize certain kinds of environment typical of modern life. The list immediately following also includes many novels of modern life, but with emphasis more upon character development.

## NOVELS OF CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

*Youth and Romance*

Chase, M. E., *Mary Peters*  
 Ferber, Edna, *So Big*  
 Fisher, D. C., *The Bent Twig; The Deepening Stream*  
 Poole, Ernest, *The Harbor*  
 Tarkington, Booth, *The Turmoil; Alice Adams*

*More Mature Studies*

Allen, Hervey, *Anthony Adverse*  
 Deland, Margaret, *The Iron Woman*  
 Gale, Zona, *Miss Lulu Bett*  
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, *The House of the Seven Gables; The Scarlet Letter; The Marble Faun*  
 Howells, W. D., *The Rise of Silas Lapham; a Modern Instance*  
 James, Henry, *The American; The Portrait of a Lady*  
 Lewis, Sinclair, *Arrowsmith; Dodsworth*  
 Suckow, Ruth, *The Folks*  
 Wharton, Edith, *Ethan Frome* (novelette)  
 Wilder, Thornton, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*



## THE ESSAY

IF WE were making a list of the things we really enjoy doing in this world, most of us would put near the top the simple, everyday act of sitting down and chatting with our best friends about things in general. Our minds are then comfortable and relaxed; our ideas flow without great effort. We may surprise ourselves occasionally by a sudden realization of how well we have been talking, or perhaps we may forget ourselves completely in listening to the engrossing conversation of a friend.

But to read an essay — ah, that is a different matter. Many a student in the presence of the word “essay” snaps his mind to with a click, resolving in advance to be either bored or irritated. Thus he cuts himself off from a great company of goodly companions. For your true essayist is simply an intimate friend without bodily substance. He is a genial ghost (or if you don’t like that word — a spirit) who takes you fishing with him or hiking across the hills; or on a chilly, rainy day he invites you into his study where you toast your shins before his open fire and have much “good talk.”

You are astonished at how well you come to know your essay friend in a short time. He has the advantage over the mere storyteller, or dramatist, for he can talk about himself. As one essayist says, “If I like cats and snowstorms, and you like cats and snowstorms, we are likely to come together on that mutual ground and clasp shadow hands across the page. But if you do not like cats and snowstorms, why then you will not like me, and we needn’t bore each other, need we?”

After all, our daily lives are full of essays. Wherever people are thrown together for an hour's chat, be it in train, hotel lobby, party, picnic, or what not, you will hear little essays in progress on "The Weather," "What I Like to Eat," "How to Reduce," "Where to Spend a Vacation," "The Kind of People I Like," "The Best Make of Car," and so on and on.

**The essay an unrestricted form.** The essay has not developed as a form in the same sense that the short story has, because it is essentially without rules. Almost any discussion of any subject could be called an essay. The word originally meant an "attempt"; and, therefore, while the essay may range in length from a few hundred to several thousand words, it is, nevertheless, comparatively short and never sets out to exhaust a subject but merely to touch on some interesting phase of it. In general an essay follows the laws of unity, confining itself to a definite aspect of the subject; but even that rule may be set aside when we class as an essay some rambling comment on life, as aimless as an evening stroll. Carl Van Doren, the literary critic, says of the essay: "It may be of any length, breadth, depth, weight, density, color, savor, odor, appearance, importance, value, or uselessness which you can or will give it. . . . It differs from a letter by being written to more — happily a great many more — than one person. It differs from talk chiefly by being written at all."

**Development of the essay as a literary form.** To study the history of the essay you would have to go back many centuries and cross the ocean. A sixteenth-century Frenchman, Montaigne, first used the word *essai* for his comments on life. Bacon and Addison were famous English essayists long before the type had a chance to develop in America. In our colonial and Revolutionary periods there was a great deal of prose written, but usually in the form of sermons, personal experiences, historical accounts, or political treatises rather than in the form we think of as the essay today. With the nineteenth century came the real beginning of the American essay with the great names of Irving, Emerson, Holmes, Thoreau, and Lowell, each of whom wrote a different variety. The first four you will encounter in the selections to follow. Lowell distinguished himself as a literary critic of great power and penetration. Although he insisted upon the value of American self-expression and the weakness of mere imitation of the past, his importance lay in his bringing the great writers of the world to the attention of Americans and in his critical judgment which made use of all the "wisdom of the ages." Among scholars today his reputation as a critic is greater than as a poet; but the rank and file

will remember and enjoy his poetry primarily, for his essays demand from the reader a mature literary point of view.

Since the time of these "classic" writers American essayists have become legion. Practically everyone who writes at all writes some form of the essay at some time or other. So we must include in the ranks of the essayists many writers whose main reputation rests upon fiction or poetry or drama, as well as those who have devoted themselves more exclusively to the essay.

The essay intimately related to magazine and newspaper. Our earliest essays were fathered by the colonial periodicals, and today the magazine of America continues to be the foster parent of the essay, giving it protection and nourishment. To some extent the newspaper does, too. What, after all, are the editorials and many of the feature articles in our daily papers but essays — short "attempts" — to inform, to influence, to arouse thought, or only to entertain? So, too, the typical magazine article is a more extended essay on current problems, on travel, science, household management, books, the theater, or what not. Many of these are purely popular and temporary in their appeal. They die a natural death when the periodical in which they appear has been sent to the paper sale or buried in a library file. But others attain the immortality of a reputation. While the informational or critical article is today far more widely read than the familiar or personal essay written with literary distinction, there is still harbor for the latter form in such magazines as the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's*.

One form of magazine material which has become greatly "streamlined" for popular appeal since Lowell's day is the book review. Seeking guidance among the great quantities of reading matter turned out from our publishing houses every year, readers are turning more and more to the book-review section of periodicals or to magazines, such as the *Saturday Review of Literature*, devoted primarily to such guidance. Since the book review is a form of essay which students are often called upon to write in literature classes, some good examples from recent periodicals have been included in this section.

The essay related to longer books. So far we have been discussing the essay as a comparatively short unit of writing. But there are certain types of nonfiction books which are closely allied to the essay. It is easy enough to identify the collection of essays — a book of unrelated short pieces, sometimes by one author, or again by various authors. Emerson's *Essays*, selections from which are to be found in this section, would be a good example of a writer's book of essays.

But in another book an author may present a series of short essays, each a separate unit but so closely related in theme that when put together they build up a unified picture or experience in the mind of the reader. An outstanding example of this is Clarence Day's *Life with Father*, which leaves one with as vivid impressions of characters as a novel does; yet it is definitely a series of short separate essays. Or again, a writer may be giving us a series of experiences or comments so closely related in a time sequence that we cannot call it a book of essays, yet any chapter having a unity of its own may be read by itself with as much pleasure and have as much form and finish as the average essay. In this section the chapter from Anne Lindbergh's *Listen! the Wind* illustrates the point. Thus we can easily see how the short essay shades into the extended book and how hard it is to put definite limits to this most elusive of all types.

**And now to be off** — Before you read some of the earlier essays of our literature, you will enjoy meeting two of our famed wits of the twentieth century. They seem to have a way of taking us at once into the circle of their personal friends. Their essays are "good talk." If these or others within these pages make you want to "talk back" on paper, so much the better. A good essayist is like an electric current sent through the brain. He makes us tingle with ideas.

## *Two Modern Familiar Essays*

ROBERT C. BENCHLEY (1889— )

Robert C. Benchley, long-time dramatic critic of the old *Life*, is one of our best-known professional humorists of today. He is always doing the unexpected. Once when asked to furnish details of his life, he wrote a chronological table containing such items as these:

Born, Isle of Wight, September 15, 1807  
 Shipped as cabin boy in *Florence J. Marble*, 1815  
 Married Princess Anastasia of Portugal, 1831  
 Wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1850  
 Began *Les Misérables*, 1870 (finished by Victor Hugo)  
 Died 1871. Buried in Westminster Abbey.

After such a chronicle the actual facts are too tame to mention. Again, as a preface to his book *Of All Things!* he simply prints the beginning of the Declaration of Independence without further comment. This makes the reader exclaim the words of the title, and he is thus prepared for further absurdities. Other ridiculous titles of Benchley's volumes are *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea*, or *David Copperfield* and *From Bed to Worse*. Benchley is a great parodist. He parodies the style of prominent magazines through "Tabloid Editions," and he also apes recent books and authors. One of his best short parodies is on Dickens's *Christmas Carol*, with a cynical picture of the American family after the big Christmas dinner. He is also fond of picturing himself as a representative American going through the absurdities to which modern life subjects us, from week-end visiting to radio broadcasting. In recent years he has literally "pictured himself" in a popular series of short films in the movies, so that his genial face and rotund person are quite familiar to the public. Some of these comic shorts have satirized the "how-to-do" type of book with considerable catastrophe to himself as the doer. When he demonstrates how to take care of a baby, for instance, he has come as near as possible to transferring the light familiar essay to the screen.

The following essay from *Treasurer's Report* is a typical discussion of a universal experience.

### SPORTING LIFE IN AMERICA: DOZING

WE AMERICANS are a hardy race, and hardy races need a lot of sleep. "Sleep, that knits up the ravel'd sleeve of care," Shakespeare has called it, and, except for the fact that it doesn't mean much, it is a pretty good simile. I often think of it myself just as I am dropping off into a light doze: "Sleep, that sleeves up the raveled care of . . . knit, that sleeps up the shaved neeve of pfor — pff — prpf — or pfff" (trailing off into a low whistle).

One of the most charming manifestations of sleep which we, as a nation, indulge in as a pastime is the Doze. By the Doze I mean those little snatches of sleep which are caught now and then during the day, usually with the collar on and choking slightly, with the head inclined coyly to one side, during which there is a semiconscious attempt to appear as if we were really awake. It is in this department of sleep that we are really at our best.

Of course, there is one form of doze which, to the casual observer or tourist, gives the appearance of legitimate sleep. This is the short doze, or "quickie," which is taken just after the main awakening in the morning. The alarm rings, or the Lord High Chamberlain taps us on the shoulder (in the absence of a chamberlain a relative will



do. And right here I would like to offer for examination that type of sadistic relative who takes actual delight in awakening people. They hover about with ghoulish anticipation until the minute arrives when they may legitimately begin their dirty work, and then, leering unpleasantly, they shake the sleeper roughly with a "Come, come! Time to get up!" and wait right there until he is actually out on the cold floor in his bare feet. There is something radically wrong with such people, and the sooner they are exposed as pathological cases the better it will be for the world). I'm sorry. I didn't mean to be nasty about it.

At any rate, we are awakened and look at the clock. There are five minutes before it is absolutely necessary to get out of bed. If we leave shaving until night, there might even be fifteen minutes. If we leave dressing until we get to the office, snatching our clothes from the chair and carrying them downtown on our arm, there might even be half an hour more for a good, health-giving nap. Who knows? Perhaps those few minutes of extra sleep might make us just ten times as efficient during the day! That is what we must think of — efficiency. We must sacrifice our petty opinions on the matter and think of the rest of the day and our efficiency. There is no doubt that fifteen minutes' more sleep would do wonders for us, no matter how little we really want to take it.

By the time we have finished this line of argument we are pretty fairly cold again, but not so cold that we are not conscious of anyone entering the room. We feel that they are going to say, "Come, come, don't go back to sleep again!" and we forestall this warning with a brisk "I know! I know! I'm just thinking!" This is said with one eye partially open and one tiny corner of the brain functioning. The rest of our powers add up to a total loss.

It is one of nature's wonders how a man can carry on an argument with someone standing beside his bed and still be asleep to all intents and purposes. Not a very good argument, perhaps, and one in which many important words are missing or indistinct, but still an argument. It is an argument, however, which seldom wins, the state of justice in the world being what it is today.

Dozing before arising does not really come within the range of this treatise. What we are concerned with are those little lapses when we are fully dressed, when we fondly believe that no one notices. Riding on a train, for example.

There is the short-distance doze in a day coach, probably the most humiliating form of train sleeping. In this the elbow is rested on the

window sill and the head placed in the hand in an attitude of thought. The glass feels very cool on the forehead and we rest it there, more to cool off than anything else. The next thing we know the forehead (carrying the entire head with it) has slid down the length of the slippery pane and we have received a rather nasty bang against the woodwork. They shouldn't keep their glass so slippery. A person is likely to get badly hurt that way.

However, back again goes the forehead against the pane in its original position, with the hand serving more or less as a buffer, until another skid occurs, this time resulting in an angry determination to give the whole thing up entirely and sit up straight in the seat. Some dozers will take four or five slides without whimpering, going back each time for more with apparently undiminished confidence in their ability to see the thing through.

It is a game that you can't beat, however, and the sooner you sit up straight in your seat, the sooner you will stop banging your head.

Dozing in a Pullman chair is not so dangerous, as one does not have the risk of the sliding glass to cope with, but it is even less lovely in its appearance. Here the head is allowed to sink back against the antimacassar — just for a minute to see if the headrest is really as comfortable as it seems. It is then but the work of a minute for the mouth to open slightly and the head to tip roguishly to the right, and there you are — as pretty a picture as one would care to see. You are very lucky if, when you come to and look about, you do not find your neighbors smiling indulgently at some little vagaries of breathing or eccentricities of facial expression which you have been permitting yourself.

The game in all this public dozing is to act, on awakening, as if you had known all along what you were doing. If your neighbors are smiling, you should smile back, as if to say, " Fooled you that time! You thought I was asleep, didn't you? "

If they are not quite so rude as to smile, but look quickly back at their reading on seeing your eyes open, you should assume a brisk, businesslike expression indicating that you have been thinking out some weighty business problem with your eyes closed, and, now that you have at last come on its solution, that it is snap-snap! back to work for you! If, after a furtive look around, you discover that no one has caught you at it, then it will do no harm to give it another try, this time until your collar chokes you into awakening with a strangling gasp.

The collar, however, is not always an impediment to public dozing.

In the theater, for example, a good, stiff, dress collar and shirt bosom have been known to hold the sleeper in an upright position when otherwise he might have plunged forward and banged his head on the back of the seat in front.

In my professional capacity as play reviewer I have had occasion to experiment in the various ways of sitting up straight and still snatching a few winks of health-giving sleep. I have found that by far the safest is to keep one's heavy overcoat on, especially if it is made of some good, substantial material which will hold a sagging torso erect within its folds. With a good overcoat, reinforced by a stiff dress shirt and a high collar, one may even go beyond the dozing stage and sink into a deep, refreshing slumber, and still not be made conspicuous by continual lurchings and plungings. Of course, if you are an uneasy sleeper and given to thrashing about, you will find that even a heavy overcoat will let you down once in a while. But for the average man, who holds approximately the same position after he has gone to sleep, I don't think that this method can go wrong. Its only drawback is that you are likely to get a little warm along about the middle of the second act.

If you don't want to wear your overcoat in the theater, the next best method is to fold the arms across the chest and brace the chin against the dress collar, exerting a slight upward pressure with the arms against the shirt front. This, however, can be used only for the lightest of dozes, as, once unconsciousness has set in, the pressure relaxes and over you go.

Dozing at a play, however refreshing, makes it a bit difficult to follow the argument on the stage, as occasionally the nap drags itself out into a couple of minutes and you awake to find a wholly fresh set of characters on the scene, or even a wholly fresh scene. This is confusing. It is therefore wise to have someone along with you who will alternate watches with you, dozing when you are awake and keeping more or less alert while you are dozing. In this way you can keep abreast of what has been happening.

This, unfortunately, is impossible in personal conversations. If you slip off into a quick coma late some evening when your *vis-à-vis*<sup>1</sup> is telling you about South America or a new solvent process, it is usually pretty difficult to pick up the thread where you dropped it. You may remember that the last words he was saying were "— which is situated at the mouth of the Amazon," but that isn't going to help you much if you come to just as he is asking you, "What would you

<sup>1</sup> *vis-à-vis*: person facing you.

say are?" As in the personal-conversation doze the eyes very seldom completely close (it is more of a turning-back of the eyeballs than a closing of the lids), you may escape detection if you have a ready answer for the emergency. I find that "Well, I don't know," said very slowly and deliberately, will fit almost any question that has been asked you. "Yes" and "No" should never be offered, as they might make you sound even sillier than you look. If you say, "Well, I — don't — know," it will give you a chance to collect your wits (what few there are left) and may lead your questioner into answering the thing himself.

At any rate, it will serve as a stall. If there are other people present, some one of them is quite likely to come to your rescue and say something which will tip you off as to the general subject under discussion. From then on, you will have to fight your own battle. I can't help you.

The whole problem is one which calls for a great deal of thought. If we can develop some way in which a man can doze and still keep from making a monkey of himself, we have removed one of the big obstacles to human happiness in modern civilization. It goes without saying that we don't get enough sleep while we are in bed; so we have got to get a little now and then while we are at work or at play. If we can find some way to keep the head up straight, the mouth closed, and just enough of the brain working to answer questions, we have got the thing solved right there.

I am working on it right now, as a matter of fact, but I find it a little difficult to keep awake.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Try writing an essay of your own on some other kind of sporting life in America as incongruous as "Dozing," such as "Straphanging in a Street-car," "Dodging Automobiles," "Bluffing," "Taking Quizzes," "Amateur Radio Programs." Make clear to the reader where the "sporting" element comes in.

2. Vocabulary: sadistic, ghoulish, pathological, treatise, antimacassar, torso, coma.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

3. *Vagaries* (page 257) and *eccentricities* (page 257) are two types of variation from usual behavior that Benchley thinks are likely to show up when we are asleep. Both words are used of more important and extensive activities than the expressions of a sleeper. A *vagary* is a whim, a sudden

caprice, a variation from the usual behavior of the person. An *eccentricity* may be habitual with the person and different only from the behavior of most people. In the next essay you will find the word *idiosyncrasy* (page 265), which has a still stronger meaning of a peculiarity that is distinctive of a certain individual. The writer says that every clock "has its little *idiosyncrasies*." Which word would be best to name a man's joining the clowns in a circus parade? a habit of carrying an umbrella on even the sunniest days? a deadly fear of cats?

### CLARENCE DAY (1874-1935)

Quite different from Benchley in his method of creating humorous effects is Clarence Day. Instead of comic exaggerations or absurd predicaments of man in general, Day uses the simple, undisguised facts of his boyhood home. This home would not have struck the casual observer as a source of comedy. The family, one of New York's prominent and prosperous ones, lived in a typical brownstone front on Madison Avenue in the seventies and eighties. The father, Clarence Day, Sr., son of the founder of the *New York Sun*, was a successful stockbroker. The mother had been a beautiful debutante before her marriage. The four little boys were brought up with all the advantages of that day. Servants kept the household routine running smoothly. From without, the family would seem to inspire awe or envy, perhaps, but certainly not laughter. Yet seen through the eyes of the eldest son, this family has become one of the chief American mirth producers.

Clarence Day's mature life was a struggle against disease, mention of which he never allowed to creep into his books or his conversation. After leaving Yale, he enlisted in the Navy to escape the seat on the stock exchange which his father insisted on buying for him. Here he developed arthritis, which crippled him to such an extent that he spent much of the rest of his life on crutches, in a wheel chair, or in bed. But this did not deter him from trying ranch life in Colorado, managing a glove business, making and losing money on the stock exchange, marrying a charming New England girl, and gaining a reputation as one of the wittiest conversationalists in New York. He could draw clever sketches as well as write — all the more remarkable when we learn that because of his disease he had to hold his pencil awkwardly between thumb and third finger and move his muscles from the shoulder.

Although he wrote several other witty books, Day's real place in American literature has been won by the three comparatively short books of sketches about his own family — *God and My Father*, *Life with Father*, and *Life with Mother*. Since the author's death, incidents and conversa-

tion from these books have been cleverly woven into a comedy called *Life with Father*, one of the greatest successes of the New York theatrical season of 1939-40. It is no wonder that this amazing family has won popular favor on the stage as well as between the covers of a book.

Father, strong-willed, authoritative, expecting to dominate his home as he does his business, finds unaccountable obstacles in mother's quiet determination, in boy nature, in social conventions, and in things in general which do not bow immediately to his will. His explosions rock the household, but the reader feels underneath the tempest the saving foundation of family affection and solidarity. Of course, the whole family had red hair; and Clarence remarked once that he actually pitied those dull families that were always quiet and mannerly.

### FATHER AND HIS HARD-ROCKING SHIP

FATHER said that one great mystery about the monthly household expenses was what made them jump up and down so. "Anyone would suppose that there would be some regularity after a while which would let a man try to make plans, but I never know from one month to another what to expect."

Mother said she didn't, either. Things just seemed to go that way.

"But they have no business to go that way, Vinnie," Father declared. "And, what's more, I won't allow it."

Mother said she didn't see what she could do about it. All she knew was that when the bills mounted up it didn't mean that she had been extravagant.

"Well, it certainly means that you've spent a devil of a lot of money," said Father.

Mother looked at him obstinately. She couldn't exactly deny this, but she said that it wasn't fair.

Appearances were often hopelessly against Mother, but that never daunted her. She wasn't afraid of Father or anybody. She was a woman of great spirit who would have flown at and pecked any tyrant. It was only when she had a bad conscience that she had no heart to fight. Father had the best of her there because he never had a bad conscience. And he didn't know that he was a tyrant. He regarded himself as a long-suffering man who asked little of anybody, and who showed only the greatest moderation in his encounters with unreasonable beings like Mother. Mother's one advantage over him was that she was quicker. She was particularly elusive when Father was trying to hammer her into shape.

When the household expenses shot up very high, Father got fright-

ened. He would then, as Mother put it, yell his head off. He always did some yelling anyhow, merely on general principles, but when his alarm was genuine he roared in real anguish.

Usually this brought the total down again, at least for a while. But there were times when no amount of noise seemed to do any good, and when every month for one reason or another the total went on up and up. And then, just as Father had almost resigned himself to this awful outgo, and just as he had eased up on his yelling and had begun to feel grim, the expenses, to his utter amazement, would take a sharp drop.

Mother didn't keep track of these totals; she was too busy watching small details, and Father never knew whether to tell her the good news or not. He always did tell her, because he couldn't keep things to himself. But he always had cause to regret it.

When he told her, he did it in as disciplinary a manner as possible. He didn't congratulate her on the expenses having come down. He appeared at her door, waving the bills at her with a threatening scowl, and said, "I've told you again and again that you could keep the expenses down if you tried, and this shows I was right."

Mother was always startled at such attacks, but she didn't lose her presence of mind. She asked how much less the amount was and said it was all due to her good management, of course, and Father ought to give her the difference.

At this point Father suddenly found himself on the defensive and the entire moral lecture that he had intended to deliver was wrecked. The more they talked, the clearer it seemed to Mother that he owed her that money. Only when he was lucky could he get out of her room without paying it.

He said that this was one of the things about her that was enough to drive a man mad.

The other thing was her lack of system, which was always cropping up in new ways. He sometimes looked at Mother as though he had never seen her before. "Upon my soul," he said, "I almost believe you don't know what system is. You don't even want to know, either."

He had at last invented what seemed a perfect method of recording expenses. Whenever he gave any money to Mother, he asked her what it was for and made a note of it in his pocket notebook. His idea was that these items, added to those in the itemized bills, would show him exactly where every dollar had gone.

But they didn't.

He consulted his notebook. "I gave you six dollars in cash on the twenty-fifth of last month," he said, "to buy a new coffeepot."

"Yes," Mother said, "because you broke your old one. You threw it right on the floor."

Father frowned. "I'm not talking about that," he answered. "I am simply endeavoring to find out from you, if I can —"

"But it's so silly to break a nice coffeepot, Clare, and that was the last of those French ones, and there was nothing the matter with the coffee that morning; it was made just the same as it always is."

"It wasn't," said Father. "It was made in a barbaric manner."

"And I couldn't get another French one," Mother continued, "because that little shop the Auffmordts told us about has stopped selling them. They said the tariff wouldn't let them any more, and I told Monsieur Duval he ought to be ashamed of himself to stand there and say so. I said that if I had a shop I'd like to see the tariff keep me from selling things."

"But I gave you six dollars to buy a new pot," Father firmly repeated, "and now I find that you apparently got one at Lewis and Conger's and charged it. Here's their bill: 'One brown earthenware drip coffeepot, five dollars.'"

"So I saved you a dollar," Mother triumphantly said, "and you can hand it right over to me."

"Bah! What nonsense you talk!" Father cried. "Is there no way to get this thing straightened out? What did you do with the six dollars?"

"Why, Clare! I can't tell you now, dear. Why didn't you ask at the time?"

"Oh, great Scott!" Father groaned.

"Wait a moment," said Mother. "I spent four dollars and a half for that new umbrella I told you I wanted, and you said I didn't need a new one; but I did, very much."

Father got out his pencil and wrote "New Umbrella for V." in his notebook.

"And that must have been the week," Mother went on, "that I paid Mrs. Tobin for two extra days' washing, so that was two dollars more out of it, which makes it six-fifty. There's another fifty cents that you owe me."

"I don't owe you anything," Father said. "You have managed to turn a coffeepot for me into a new umbrella for you. No matter what I give you money for, you buy something else with it; and if this is to keep on, I might as well not keep account books at all."



"I'd like to see you run this house without having any money on hand for things," Mother said.

"I am not made of money," Father replied. "You seem to think I only have to put my hand in my pocket to get some."

Mother not only thought this, she knew it. His wallet always was full. That was the provoking part of it — she knew he had the money right there, but he tried to keep from giving it to her. She had to argue it out of him.

"Well, you can put your hand in your pocket and give me that dollar-fifty this minute," she said. "You owe me that, anyhow."

Father said he didn't have a dollar-fifty to spare and tried to get back to his desk, but Mother wouldn't let him go till he paid her. She said she wouldn't put up with injustice.

Mother said it hampered her dreadfully never to have any cash. She was always having to pay out small amounts for demands that she had forgot to provide for, and in such emergencies the only way to do was to juggle things around. One result, however, of all these more or less innocent shifts was that in this way she usually took care of all her follies herself. All the small ones, at any rate. They never got entered on Father's books, except when they were monstrous.

She came home one late afternoon in a terrible state. "Has it come yet?" she asked the waitress.

The waitress said nothing had come that she knew of.

Mother ran upstairs with a hunted expression and flung herself down on her bed. When we looked in, she was sobbing.

It turned out that she had gone to an auction, and she had become so excited that she had bought but not paid for a grandfather's clock.

Mother knew in her heart that she had no business going to auctions. She was too suggestible; and if an hypnotic auctioneer once got her eye, she was lost. Besides, an auction aroused all her worst instincts — her combativeness, her recklessness, and her avaricious love of a bargain. And the worst of it was that this time it wasn't a bargain at all. At least she didn't think it was now. The awful old thing was about eight feet tall, and it wasn't the one she had wanted. It wasn't half as nice as the clock that old Miss Van Derwent had bought. And inside the hood over the dial, she said, there was a little ship which at first she hadn't noticed, a horrid ship that rocked up and down every time the clock ticked. It made her ill just to look at it. And she didn't have the money, and the man said he'd have to send it this evening, and what would Father say?

She came down to dinner, and left halfway through. Couldn't

stand it. But an hour or two later, when the doorbell rang, she bravely went to tell Father.

She could hardly believe it; but she found that luck was with her, for once. If the clock had come earlier, there might have been a major catastrophe; but Father was in a good mood, and he had had a good dinner. And though he never admitted it or spoke of it, he had a weakness for clocks. There were clocks all over the house, which he would allow no one to wind but himself. Every Sunday between breakfast and church he made the rounds, setting them at the right time by his infallible watch, regulating their speed, and telling us about every clock's little idiosyncrasies. When he happened to be coming downstairs on the hour, he cocked his ear, watch in hand, to listen to as many of them as he could, in the hope that they would all strike at once. He would reprove the impulsive pink clock in the spare room for striking too soon, and the big solemn clock in the dining room for being a minute too late.

So when Mother led him out in the hall to confess to him and show him what she had bought, and he saw it was a clock, he fell in love with it and made almost no fuss at all.

The letdown was too much for Mother. She tottered off to her room without another word and went straight to bed, leaving Father and the auctioneer's man setting up the new clock alongside the hat-rack. Father was especially fascinated by the hard-rocking ship.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What characteristics of Father and Mother are most evident in this selection? How do you feel toward each of them? What evidence is there of the financial standing of the family?

2. Which parts of the essay appealed to you as especially funny? Could a similar situation be treated with tragic rather than comic effect? What essential differences are there between comic bickering and tragic quarreling?

3. Why is this classed as an essay rather than as a short story? Discuss differences between the two forms.

#### *For Ambitious Students*

4. Read other parts of the Day books mentioned in the introduction, and report or read to the class especially choice bits.

5. The play, *Life with Father*, made from the Day books by Howard

Lindsay and Russell Crouse is available in book form and offers some fine opportunities for class dramatization.

6. Write an essay on some situation in your own family that lends itself to comic treatment.

## *Development of the Essay*

WASHINGTON IRVING (1783-1859)

For biographical note, see page 59.

### THE SKETCH BOOK

The writing of distinctly literary essays of permanent value in America may be said to have begun with Washington Irving's *The Sketch Book*, published in 1819-20. It was this collection of essays and tales which first won for an American author the enthusiastic response of Europe.

Irving had that gift, indispensable to the familiar essayist, of being able to stand off and view himself impersonally with a twinkle in his eye. This is the way he accounts in a later work for the popularity of the earlier venture: "It has been a matter of marvel to my European readers that a man from the wilds of America should express himself in tolerable English. I was looked upon as something new and strange in literature; a kind of demisavage with a feather in his hand instead of on his head; and there was a curiosity to hear what such a being had to say about civilized society."

In the following essays which open *The Sketch Book*, the author has shown us a miniature of himself — his love of travel and adventure, of history and legend; his loyalty to America combined with his devotion to European tradition. We have a taste of his easy-rolling sentences and his sly digs of humor. All of these traits are illuminated and vivified as we turn the pages of *The Sketch Book*, written under the appropriate name of Geoffrey Crayon. Here he has drawn loving pictures of Stratford on Avon and Westminster Abbey at the same time that he has protested vigorously against English writers' disparagement of America. Legend is mingled with direct observation, story with essay. Such combinations are to be found again in *Bracebridge Hall*, purely English in setting, and in *The Alhambra*, based on his Spanish travels. All these books are good examples of how slight is the line of demarcation between an essay and a story.

## THE AUTHOR'S ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF

I am of this mind with Homer, that as the snail that crept out of her shell was turned ere long into a toad, and thereby was forced to make a stool to sit on, so the traveler that straggled from his own country is in a short time transformed into so monstrous a shape that he is fain to alter his mansion with his manners, and to live where he can, not where he would. — LILY'S *Euphues*

I WAS always fond of visiting new scenes, and observing strange characters and manners. Even when a mere child I began my travels, and made many tours of discovery into foreign parts and unknown regions of my native city,<sup>1</sup> to the frequent alarm of my parents, and the emolument of the town crier.<sup>2</sup> As I grew into boyhood, I extended the range of my observations. My holiday afternoons were spent in rambles about the surrounding country. I made myself familiar with all its places famous in history or fable. I knew every spot where a murder or robbery had been committed, or a ghost seen. I visited the neighboring villages, and added greatly to my stock of knowledge by noting their habits and customs, and conversing with their sages and great men. I even journeyed one long summer's day to the summit of the most distant hill, whence I stretched my eye over many a mile of terra incognita,<sup>3</sup> and was astonished to find how vast a globe I inhabited.

This rambling propensity strengthened with my years. Books of voyages and travels became my passion, and in devouring their contents, I neglected the regular exercises of the school. How wistfully would I wander about the pierheads in fine weather, and watch the parting ships, bound to distant climes — with what longing eyes would I gaze after their lessening sails, and waft myself in imagination to the ends of the earth!

Further reading and thinking, though they brought this vague inclination into more reasonable bounds, only served to make it more decided. I visited various parts of my own country; and had I been merely a lover of fine scenery, I should have felt little desire to seek elsewhere its gratification, for on no country have the charms of nature been more prodigally lavished. Her mighty lakes, like oceans of liquid silver; her mountains, with their bright aerial tints; her valleys, teeming with wild fertility; her tremendous cataracts, thunder-

<sup>1</sup> native city: New York. <sup>2</sup> town crier: In the eighteenth century the town crier was a kind of animated newspaper, who served the purpose of the advertising sections of today. <sup>3</sup> terra incognita: unknown land.

ing in their solitudes; her boundless plains, waving with spontaneous verdure; her broad, deep rivers, rolling in solemn silence to the ocean; her trackless forests, where vegetation puts forth all its magnificence; her skies, kindling with the magic of summer clouds and glorious sunshine — no, never need an American look beyond his own country for the sublime and beautiful of natural scenery.

But Europe held forth the charms of storied and poetical association. There were to be seen the masterpieces of art, the refinements of highly cultivated society, the quaint peculiarities of ancient and local custom. My native country was full of youthful promise; Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every moldering stone was a chronicle. I longed to wander over the scenes of renowned achievement — to tread, as it were, in the footsteps of antiquity — to loiter about the ruined castle — to meditate on the falling tower — to escape, in short, from the commonplace realities of the present, and lose myself among the shadowy grandeurs of the past.

I had, beside all this, an earnest desire to see the great men of the earth. We have, it is true, our great men in America: not a city but has an ample share of them. I have mingled among them in my time, and been almost withered by the shade into which they cast me; for there is nothing so baleful to a small man as the shade of a great one, particularly the great man of a city. But I was anxious to see the great men of Europe; for I had read in the works of various philosophers, that all animals degenerated in America, and man among the number. A great man of Europe, thought I, must therefore be as superior to a great man of America as a peak of the Alps to a highland of the Hudson; and in this idea I was confirmed by observing the comparative importance and swelling magnitude of many English travelers among us, who, I was assured, were very little people in their own country. I will visit this land of wonders, thought I, and see the gigantic race from which I am degenerated.

It has been either my good or evil lot to have my roving passion gratified. I have wandered through different countries, and witnessed many of the shifting scenes of life. I cannot say that I have studied them with the eye of a philosopher; but rather with the sauntering gaze with which humble lovers of the picturesque stroll from the window of one print shop to another, caught sometimes by the delineations of beauty, sometimes by the distortions of caricature, and sometimes by the loveliness of landscape. As it is the fashion for modern tourists to travel pencil in hand, and bring home their portfolios filled

with sketches, I am disposed to get up a few for the entertainment of my friends. When, however, I look over the hints and memorandums I have taken down for the purpose, my heart almost fails me at finding how my idle humor has led me aside from the great objects studied by every regular traveler who would make a book. I fear I shall give equal disappointment with an unlucky landscape painter, who had traveled on the continent, but, following the bent of his vagrant inclination, had sketched in nooks, and corners, and by-places. His sketch book was accordingly crowded with cottages, and landscapes, and obscure ruins; but he had neglected to paint St. Peter's, or the Coliseum; the cascade of Terni, or the bay of Naples; and had not a single glacier or volcano in his whole collection.

#### THE VOYAGE

Ships, ships, I will descree you  
Amidst the main,  
I will come and try you,  
What you are protecting,  
And projecting,  
What's your end and aim.

One goes abroad for merchandise and trading,  
Another stays to keep his country from invading,  
A third is coming home with rich and wealthy lading,  
Halloo! my fancie, whither wilt thou go?

— *Old Poem*

To an American visiting Europe, the long voyage he has to make is an excellent preparative. The temporary absence of worldly scenes and employments produces a state of mind peculiarly fitted to receive new and vivid impressions. The vast space of waters that separates the hemispheres is like a blank page in existence. There is no gradual transition, by which, as in Europe, the features and population of one country blend almost imperceptibly with those of another. From the moment you lose sight of the land you have left, all is vacancy until you step on the opposite shore, and are launched at once into the bustle and novelties of another world.

In traveling by land there is a continuity of scene and a connected succession of persons and incidents, that carry on the story of life, and lessen the effect of absence and separation. We drag, it is true, "a lengthening chain,"<sup>1</sup> at each remove of our pilgrimage; but the chain is unbroken: we can trace it back link by link; and we feel

<sup>1</sup> "a lengthening chain": quoted from Goldsmith's poem "The Traveler."

that the last still grapples us to home. But a wide sea voyage severs us at once. It makes us conscious of being cast loose from the secure anchorage of settled life, and sent adrift upon a doubtful world. It interposes a gulf, not merely imaginary, but real, between us and our homes — a gulf subject to tempest, and fear, and uncertainty, rendering distance palpable, and return precarious.

Such, at least, was the case with myself. As I saw the last blue line of my native land fade away like a cloud in the horizon, it seemed as if I had closed one volume of the world and its concerns, and had time for meditation, before I opened another. That land, too, now vanishing from my view, which contained all most dear to me in life; what vicissitudes might occur in it — what changes might take place in me, before I should visit it again! Who can tell, when he sets forth to wander, whither he may be driven by the uncertain currents of existence; or when he may return; or whether it may ever be his lot to revisit the scenes of his childhood?

I said that at sea all is vacancy; I should correct the expression. To one given to daydreaming, and fond of losing himself in reveries, a sea voyage is full of subjects for meditation; but then they are the wonders of the deep, and of the air, and rather tend to abstract the mind from worldly themes. I delighted to loll over the quarter railing, or climb to the maintop, of a calm day, and muse for hours together on the tranquil bosom of a summer's sea; to gaze upon the piles of golden clouds just peering above the horizon, fancy them some fairy realms, and people them with a creation of my own; — to watch the gentle, undulating billows, rolling their silver volumes, as if to die away on those happy shores.

There was a delicious sensation of mingled security and awe with which I looked down from my giddy height, on the monsters of the deep at their uncouth gambols. Shoals of porpoises tumbling about the bow of the ship; the grampus<sup>1</sup> slowly heaving his huge form above the surface; or the ravenous shark, darting, like a specter, through the blue waters. My imagination would conjure up all that I had heard or read of the watery world beneath me; of the finny herds that roam its fathomless valleys; of the shapeless monsters that lurk among the very foundations of the earth; and of those wild phantasms that swell the tales of fishermen and sailors.

Sometimes a distant sail, gliding along the edge of the ocean, would be another theme of idle speculation. How interesting this fragment of a world, hastening to rejoin the great mass of existence!

<sup>1</sup> *grampus*: a small whale.

What a glorious monument of human invention; which has in a manner triumphed over wind and wave; has brought the ends of the world into communion; has established an interchange of blessings, pouring into the sterile regions of the north all the luxuries of the south; has diffused the light of knowledge and the charities of cultivated life; and has thus bound together those scattered portions of the human race, between which nature seemed to have thrown an insurmountable barrier.

We one day descried some shapeless object drifting at a distance. At sea, everything that breaks the monotony of the surrounding expanse attracts attention. It proved to be the mast of a ship that must have been completely wrecked; for there were the remains of handkerchiefs, by which some of the crew had fastened themselves to this spar, to prevent their being washed off by the waves. There was no trace by which the name of the ship could be ascertained. The wreck had evidently drifted about for many months; clusters of shellfish had fastened about it, and long seaweeds flaunted at its sides. But where, thought I, is the crew? Their struggle has long been over — they have gone down amidst the roar of the tempest — their bones lie whitening among the caverns of the deep. Silence, oblivion, like the waves, have closed over them, and no one can tell the story of their end. What sighs have been wafted after that ship! what prayers offered up at the deserted fireside of home! How often has the mistress, the wife, the mother, pored over the daily news, to catch some casual intelligence of this rover of the deep! How has expectation darkened into anxiety — anxiety into dread — and dread into despair! Alas! not one memento may ever return for love to cherish. All that may ever be known is, that she sailed from her port, “and was never heard of more!”

The sight of this wreck, as usual, gave rise to many dismal anecdotes. This was particularly the case in the evening, when the weather, which had hitherto been fair, began to look wild and threatening, and gave indications of one of those sudden storms which will sometimes break in upon the serenity of a summer voyage. As we sat round the dull light of a lamp in the cabin, that made the gloom more ghastly, everyone had his tale of shipwreck and disaster. I was particularly struck with a short one related by the captain.

“As I was once sailing,” said he, “in a fine stout ship across the banks of Newfoundland, one of those heavy fogs which prevail in those parts rendered it impossible for us to see far ahead even in the daytime; but at night the weather was so thick that we could not



distinguish any object at twice the length of the ship. I kept lights at the masthead, and a constant watch forward to look out for fishing smacks, which are accustomed to lie at anchor on the banks. The wind was blowing a smacking breeze, and we were going at a great rate through the water. Suddenly the watch gave the alarm of 'a sail ahead!' — it was scarcely uttered before we were upon her. She was a small schooner, at anchor, with her broadside toward us. The crew were all asleep, and had neglected to hoist a light. We struck her just amidships. The force, the size, and weight of our vessel bore her down below the waves; we passed over her and were hurried on our course. As the crashing wreck was sinking beneath us, I had a glimpse of two or three half-naked wretches rushing from her cabin; they just started from their beds to be swallowed shrieking by the waves. I heard their drowning cry mingling with the wind. The blast that bore it to our ears swept us out of all farther hearing. I shall never forget that cry! It was some time before we could put the ship about, she was under such headway. We returned, as nearly as we could guess, to the place where the smack had anchored. We cruised about for several hours in the dense fog. We fired signal guns, and listened if we might hear the halloo of any survivors: but all was silent — we never saw or heard anything of them more."

I confess these stories, for a time, put an end to all my fine fancies. The storm increased with the night. The sea was lashed into tremendous confusion. There was a fearful, sullen sound of rushing waves, and broken surges. Deep called unto deep. At times the black volume of clouds overhead seemed rent asunder by flashes of lightning which quivered along the foaming billows, and made the succeeding darkness doubly terrible. The thunders bellowed over the wild waste of waters, and were echoed and prolonged by the mountain waves. As I saw the ship staggering and plunging among these roaring caverns, it seemed miraculous that she regained her balance, or preserved her buoyancy. Her yards would dip into the water; her bow was almost buried beneath the waves. Sometimes an impending surge appeared ready to overwhelm her, and nothing but a dexterous movement of the helm preserved her from the shock.

When I retired to my cabin, the awful scene still followed me. The whistling of the wind through the rigging sounded like funereal wailings. The creaking of the masts, the straining and groaning of bulkheads, as the ship labored in the weltering sea, were frightful. As I heard the waves rushing along the sides of the ship, and roaring in my very ear, it seemed as if Death were raging round this floating prison

seeking for his prey; the mere starting of a nail, the yawning of a seam, might give him entrance.

A fine day, however, with a tranquil sea and favoring breeze, soon put all these dismal reflections to flight. It is impossible to resist the gladdening influence of fine weather and fair wind at sea. When the ship is decked out in all her canvas, every sail swelled, and careering gaily over the curling waves, how lofty, how gallant she appears — how she seems to lord it over the deep!

I might fill a volume with reveries of a sea voyage, for with me it is almost a continual reverie — but it is time to get to shore.

It was a fine sunny morning when the thrilling cry of "Land!" was given from the masthead. None but those who have experienced it can form an idea of the delicious throng of sensations which rush into an American's bosom, when he first comes in sight of Europe. There is a volume of associations with the very name. It is the land of promise, teeming with everything of which his childhood has heard, or on which his studious years have pondered.

From that time until the moment of arrival, it was all feverish excitement. The ships of war, that prowled like guardian giants along the coast; the headlands of Ireland, stretching out into the channel; the Welsh mountains, towering into the clouds; all were objects of intense interest. As we sailed up the Mersey,<sup>1</sup> I reconnoitered the shores with a telescope. My eye dwelt with delight on neat cottages, with their trim shrubberies and green grassplots. I saw the moldering ruin of an abbey overrun with ivy, and the taper spire of a village church rising from the brow of a neighboring hill — all were characteristic of England.

The tide and wind were so favorable that the ship was enabled to come at once to the pier. It was thronged with people; some, idle lookers-on, others, eager expectants of friends or relatives. I could distinguish the merchant to whom the ship was consigned. I knew him by his calculating brow and restless air. His hands were thrust into his pockets; he was whistling thoughtfully, and walking to and fro, a small space having been accorded him by the crowd, in deference to his temporary importance. There were repeated cheerings and salutations interchanged between the shore and the ship, as friends happened to recognize each other. I particularly noticed one young woman of humble dress, but interesting demeanor. She was leaning forward from among the crowd; her eye hurried over the ship as it neared the shore, to catch some wished-for countenance. She seemed

<sup>1</sup> **Mersey:** river on which the port of landing, Liverpool, is situated.

disappointed and agitated, when I heard a faint voice call her name. It was from a poor sailor who had been ill all the voyage, and had excited the sympathy of everyone on board. When the weather was fine, his messmates had spread a mattress for him on deck in the shade, but of late his illness had so increased, that he had taken to his hammock, and only breathed a wish that he might see his wife before he died. He had been helped on deck as we came up the river, and was now leaning against the shrouds, with a countenance so wasted, so pale, so ghastly, that it was no wonder even the eye of affection did not recognize him. But at the sound of his voice, her eye darted on his features; it read, at once, a whole volume of sorrow; she clasped her hands, uttered a faint shriek, and stood wringing them in silent agony.

All now was hurry and bustle. The meetings of acquaintances — the greetings of friends — the consultations of men of business. I alone was solitary and idle. I had no friend to meet, no cheering to receive. I stepped upon the land of my forefathers — but felt that I was a stranger in the land.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How does Irving illustrate the proverb "Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined"? What do you think would be his attitude toward the slogan "See America first"?
2. Would you enjoy a trip to Europe in the company of Irving? Why or why not? What personal traits of his are clearly shown?
3. Irving's essays show a constant blend of humor and sentiment. At what points do you find either uppermost in these essays?
4. Vocabulary: emolument, propensity, palpable, precarious, vicissitudes, undulating, phantasm.

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

5. *Dexterous* (page 272), an adjective Irving uses to describe the movement of the helm that saved the ship during the storm, literally means with the right hand or in a right-handed manner; therefore, skillfully and easily. It is used of either physical or mental activity, but more often of physical. *Dexterity* is the noun for this skill and ease. A word of similar meaning based on the French for the right hand is *adroit*. *Adroit* is used more often of skill in handling people and situations, and it implies more difficulties to be overcome than *dexterous*. One word based on *dexter* has no substitute: *ambidextrous*, meaning equally skillful with either hand, and sometimes used figuratively to describe a person of many different skills.

*For Ambitious Students*

6. Look up, and if possible bring to class, pictures of nineteenth-century sailing vessels and modern ocean liners for comparison. (See *Ship Models* by E. K. Chatterton or *The Book of Old Ships* by G. Grant and H. B. Culver.) Which parts of Irving's descriptions would be true today? Which are outmoded?

7. Read other accounts of sea voyages of Irving's day, such as those in *Treasure Island*, *Moby Dick*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, and *Two Years before the Mast* (see page 1017).

8. Read other essays by Irving to become better acquainted with him. You would enjoy "Christmas Sketches," "John Bull," and "The Angler" in *The Sketch Book*; "May-Day Customs" and "Popular Superstitions" in *Bracebridge Hall*; "Inhabitants of the Alhambra" and "Public Fetes of Granada" in *The Alhambra*.

## RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

Whether or not you have read a word written by Ralph Waldo Emerson, you must at least be familiar with his name, for he has left a deep imprint on American life. Schools, streets, and even cigars have been named for him. But how many who glibly bandy his name know the real man or can understand his message? It is not written so that "he who runs may read." His essays are not ice-cream sodas with which to beguile a warm afternoon but, rather, substantial food, such as Bacon meant when he said that some few books are to be "chewed and digested."

Emerson's life was bound up with Boston and the village of Concord, twenty miles out. The city was the place of his birth, his schooling, and his early ministry. But his real career, in which he spoke to the world for half a century, was in the village, where he was the center of the most remarkable literary group ever contained in this country by one small town.

With the tradition of a line of ministers behind him, it was inevitable that he should go to Harvard even though the untimely death of his father had left the large family an inheritance of poverty. Through the continuous efforts of his mother and of the boys themselves, four of the brothers went through college. Emerson once said that Toil, Want, Truth, and Mutual Faith were the four angels of his home. After graduation he taught school to earn money to attend the divinity school, and finally at the age of twenty-three he was ordained as a Unitarian minister. Three years later he became associate pastor of the Second Unitarian Church, one of the

oldest and most famous parishes of Boston. But this apparent success was clouded by the death of his young wife and by a severe crisis in his mental life. The young preacher could not conscientiously agree with all the doctrines of his church. Rather than conceal the fact in order to retain his office, with characteristic honesty he stated his position openly and resigned from the church. Thus did he illustrate, by an act which took considerable courage, the sincerity, self-reliance, and independence of thought which he later preached through his essays.

Fortunately his wife's estate left him an annual income of twelve hundred dollars. Meager as this seems to us today, it enabled him with a few other resources to live simply and happily in a comfortable big house in Concord, to marry a second time and rear a family, and to take an occasional trip abroad. Europe did not beckon Emerson in the same way that it did Irving. He cared little for the cathedrals, the literary shrines, or the legends. What meant the most to him was contact with the great thinkers of England, especially Thomas Carlyle, with whom he formed a permanent friendship, perpetuated for us in their published letters.

With ample leisure for meditation Emerson was gradually drawn into lyceum lecturing, which was then attaining great popularity in this country. He became the most distinctive lecturer of his day; and people not only flocked to his public lectures but even pursued him to his home, so that Concord became a kind of Mecca to the intellectuals of that day. The lectures were published from time to time, and thus it is that Emerson's essays, unlike most, were first prepared for oral delivery. More profoundly than other essays they deal with interpretations of life and thought. A swift glance at the titles will show this. "Friendship," "Love," "Self-Reliance," "Heroism," "Character," "Manners," "Compensation" — each treats of some quality of human life with a sincerity and wisdom which have won for their author such titles as seer, sage, and prophet.

It will help you in reading Emerson to understand that his unit of thought is generally the sentence — not the paragraph, as with most writers. You must, therefore, read slowly and let the complete meaning of each sentence sink in.

## GIFTS

Gifts of one who loved me, —  
'Twas high time they came;  
When he ceased to love me,  
Time they stopped for shame.

IT IS said that the world is in a state of bankruptcy, that the world owes the world more than the world can pay, and ought to go into chancery, and be sold. I do not think this general insolvency, which

involves in some sort all the population, to be the reason of the difficulty experienced at Christmas and New Year, and other times, in bestowing gifts; since it is always so pleasant to be generous, though very vexatious to pay debts. But the impediment lies in the choosing. If, at any time, it comes into my head that a present is due from me to somebody, I am puzzled what to give, until the opportunity is gone. Flowers and fruits are always fit presents — flowers, because they are a proud assertion that a ray of beauty outvalues all the utilities of the world. These gay natures contrast with the somewhat stern countenance of ordinary nature; they are like music heard out of a workhouse. Nature does not cocker<sup>1</sup> us; we are children, not pets; she is not fond<sup>2</sup>; everything is dealt to us without fear or favor, after severe universal laws. Yet these delicate flowers look like the frolic and interference of love and beauty. Men used to tell us that we love flattery, even though we are not deceived by it, because it shows that we are of importance enough to be courted. Something like that pleasure, the flowers give us: what am I to whom these sweet hints are addressed? Fruits are acceptable gifts, because they are the flower of commodities, and admit of fantastic values being attached to them. If a man should send to me to come a hundred miles to visit him, and should set before me a basket of fine summer fruit, I should think there was some proportion between the labor and the reward.

For common gifts, necessity makes pertinences and beauty every day, and one is glad when an imperative leaves him no option, since if the man at the door has no shoes you have not to consider whether you could procure him a paintbox. And as it is always pleasing to see a man eat bread, drink water, in the house or out of doors, so it is always a great satisfaction to supply these first wants. Necessity does everything well. In our condition of universal dependence, it seems heroic to let the petitioner be the judge of his necessity, and to give all that is asked, though at great inconvenience. If it be a fantastic desire, it is better to leave to others the office of punishing him. I can think of many parts I should prefer playing to that of the Furies.<sup>3</sup> Next to things of necessity, the rule for a gift, which one of my friends prescribed, is, that we might convey to some person that which properly belonged to his character, and was easily associated with him in thought. But our tokens of compliment and love are for the most part barbarous. Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but

<sup>1</sup> cocker: spoil, coddle. <sup>2</sup> fond: in the sense of foolishly tender. <sup>3</sup> Furies: in Greek mythology, beings who punished the wicked.

apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself. Thou must bleed for me. Therefore the poet brings his poem; the shepherd, his lamb; the farmer, corn; the miner, a gem; the sailor, coral and shells; the painter, his picture; the girl, a handkerchief of her own sewing. This is right and pleasing, for it restores society in so far to its primary basis, when a man's biography is conveyed in his gift, and every man's wealth is an index of his merit. But it is a cold, lifeless business when you go to the shops to buy me something, which does not represent your life and talent, but a goldsmith's. This is fit for kings, and rich men who represent kings, and a false state of property, to make presents of gold and silver stuffs, as a kind of symbolical sin-offering, or payment of blackmail.

The law of benefits is a difficult channel, which requires careful sailing, or rude boats. It is not the office of a man to receive gifts. How dare you give them? We wish to be self-sustained. We do not quite forgive a giver. The hand that feeds us is in some danger of being bitten. We can receive anything from love, for that is a way of receiving it from ourselves; but not from anyone who assumes to bestow. We sometimes hate the meat which we eat, because there seems something of degrading dependence in living by it.

Brother, if Jove to thee a present make,  
Take heed that from his hands thou nothing take.

We ask the whole. Nothing less will content us. We arraign society, if it do not give us, besides earth and fire and water, opportunity, love, reverence, and objects of veneration.

He is a good man who can receive a gift well. We are either glad or sorry at a gift, and both emotions are unbecoming. Some violence I think, is done, some degradation borne, when I rejoice or grieve at a gift. I am sorry when my independence is invaded, or when a gift comes from such as do not know my spirit, and so the act is not supported; and if the gift pleases me overmuch, then I should be ashamed that the donor should read my heart, and see that I love his commodity and not him. The gift, to be true, must be the flowing of the giver unto me, correspondent to my flowing unto him. When the waters are at a level, then my goods pass to him, and his to me. All his are mine, all mine his. I say to him, "How can you give me this pot of oil, or this flagon of wine, when all your oil and wine is mine?" which belief of mine this gift seems to deny. Hence the fitness of beautiful, not useful things for gifts. This giving is flat usurpation, and therefore when the beneficiary is ungrateful, as all beneficiaries

hate all Timons,<sup>1</sup> not at all considering the value of the gift, but looking back to the greater store it was taken from, I rather sympathize with the beneficiary than with the anger of my lord Timon. For the expectation of gratitude is mean, and is continually punished by the total insensibility of the obliged person. It is a great happiness to get off without injury and heartburning from one who has had the ill luck to be served by you. It is a very onerous business, this of being served, and the debtor naturally wishes to give you a slap. A golden text for these gentlemen is that which I so admire in the Buddhist, who never thanks, and who says, "Do not flatter your benefactors."

The reason of these discords I conceive to be, that there is no commensurability between a man and any gift. You cannot give anything to a magnanimous person. After you have served him, he at once puts you in debt by his magnanimity. The service a man renders his friend is trivial and selfish, compared with the service he knows his friend stood in readiness to yield him, alike before he had begun to serve his friend, and now also. Compared with that good will I bear my friend, the benefit it is in my power to render him seems small. Besides, our action on each other, good as well as evil, is so incidental and at random, that we can seldom hear the acknowledgments of any person who would thank us for a benefit without some shame and humiliation. We can rarely strike a direct stroke, but must be content with an oblique one; we seldom have the satisfaction of yielding a direct benefit, which is directly received. But rectitude scatters favors on every side without knowing it, and receives with wonder the thanks of all people.

I fear to breathe any treason against the majesty of love, which is the genius and god of gifts, and to whom we must not affect to prescribe. Let him give kingdoms or flower leaves indifferently. There are persons from whom we always expect fairy tokens; let us not cease to expect them. This is prerogative, and not to be limited by our municipal rules. For the rest, I like to see that we cannot be bought and sold. The best of hospitality and of generosity is also not in the will, but in fate. I find that I am not much to you; you do not need me; you do not feel me; then am I thrust out of doors, though you proffer me house and lands. No services are of any value, but only likeness. When I have attempted to join myself to others by services, it proved an intellectual trick — no more. They eat your

<sup>1</sup> **Timon:** the leading character in Shakespeare's play *Timon of Athens*, who spent his entire fortune on lavish gifts and was then spurned by those who had flattered him.



service like apples, and leave you out. But love them, and they feel you, and delight in you all the time.

## SELECTIONS FROM OTHER EMERSON ESSAYS

Since Emerson's essays are rather rambling in construction, one can gain from quotations here and there an idea of his point of view, and a vivid impression of the great thoughts which have stirred the minds of men and women for almost a century.

### *from* NATURE

It seems as if the day was not wholly profane in which we have given heed to some natural object. The fall of snowflakes in a still air, preserving to each crystal its perfect form; the blowing of sleet over a wide sheet of water, and over plains; the waving rye field; the mimic waving of acres of houstonia,<sup>1</sup> whose innumerable florets whiten and ripple before the eye; the reflections of trees and flowers in glassy lakes; the musical steaming odorous south wind, which converts all trees to wind harps; the crackling and spurting of hemlock in the flames; or of pine logs, which yield glory to the walls and faces in the sitting room — these are the music and pictures of the most ancient religion. . . . We can find these enchantments without visiting the Como Lake, or the Madeira Islands. . . . In every landscape, the point of astonishment is the meeting of the sky and the earth, and that is seen from the first hillock as well as from the top of the Alleghenies. The stars at night stoop down over the brownest, homeliest common with all the spiritual magnificence which they shed on the Campagna, or on the marble deserts of Egypt. . . . The difference between landscape and landscape is small, but there is great difference in the beholders. . . . Nature cannot be surprised in undress. Beauty breaks in everywhere.

### *from* MANNERS

The gentleman is a man of truth, lord of his own actions, and expressing that lordship in his behavior, not in any manner dependent and servile either on persons, or opinions, or possessions. Beyond this fact of truth and real force, the word denotes good nature or

<sup>1</sup> houstonia: a low, slender plant named for Dr. Houston, a naturalist.

benevolence; manhood first and then gentleness. The popular notion certainly adds a condition of ease and fortune; but that is a natural result of personal force and love, that they should possess and dispense the goods of the world. In times of violence every eminent person must fall in with many opportunities to approve<sup>1</sup> his stoutness and worth; therefore every man's name that emerged at all from the mass in the feudal ages, rattles in our ear like a flourish of trumpets. But personal force never goes out of fashion. That is still paramount today, and in the moving crowd of good society, the men of valor and reality are known, and rise to their natural place. The competition is transferred from war to politics and trade, but the personal force appears readily enough in these new arenas. . . . My gentleman gives the law where he is; he will outpray saints in chapel, outgeneral veterans in the field, and outshine all courtesy in the hall. He is good company for pirates, and good with academicians.

*from* FRIENDSHIP

A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I may think aloud. I am arrived at last in the presence of a man so real and equal that I may drop even those undermost garments of dissimulation, courtesy, and second thought, which men never put off, and may deal with him with the simplicity and wholeness with which one chemical atom meets another. Sincerity is the luxury allowed, like diadems and authority, only to the highest rank, *that* being permitted to speak truth, as having none above it to court or conform unto. Every man alone is sincere. At the entrance of a second person, hypocrisy begins. We parry and fend the approach of our fellow man by compliments, by gossip, by amusements, by affairs. We cover up our thought from him under a hundred folds. . . . Almost every man we meet requires some civility, requires to be humored — he has some fame, some talent, some whim of religion or philanthropy in his head that is not to be questioned, and which spoils all conversation with him. But a friend is a sane man who exercises not my ingenuity but me. My friend gives me entertainment without requiring me to stoop, or to lisp, or to mask myself. A friend therefore is a sort of paradox in nature. I who alone am, I who see nothing in nature whose existence I can affirm with equal evidence to my own, behold now the semblance of my being, in all its height, vari-

<sup>1</sup> approve: prove.

ety, and curiosity, reiterated in a foreign form; so that a friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of nature.

*from* COMPENSATION

The same dualism underlies the nature and condition of man. Every excess causes a defect; every defect an excess. Every sweet hath its sour; every evil its good. Every faculty which is a receiver of pleasure has an equal penalty for its abuse. It is to answer for its moderation with its life. For every grain of wit there is a grain of folly. For everything you have missed, you have gained something else; and for everything you gain, you lose something. If riches increase, they are increased that use them. If the gatherer gathers too much, nature takes out of the man what she puts into his chest; swells the estate, but kills the owner. Nature hates monopolies and exceptions. The waves of the sea do not more speedily seek a level from their loftiest tossing than the varieties of condition tend to equalize themselves. There is always some leveling circumstance that puts down the overbearing, the strong, the rich, the fortunate, substantially on the same ground with all others. . . .

The farmer imagines power and place are fine things. But the President has paid dear for his White House. It has commonly cost him all his peace, and the best of his manly attributes. To preserve for a short time so conspicuous an appearance before the world, he is content to eat dust before the real masters who stand erect behind the throne. Or do men desire the more substantial and permanent grandeur of genius? Neither has this an immunity. He who by force of will or of thought is great and overlooks thousands, has the responsibility of overlooking. With every influx of light comes new danger. Has he light? He must bear witness to the light, and always outrun that sympathy which gives him such keen satisfaction, by his fidelity to new revelations of the incessant soul.

*from* SELF-RELIANCE

There is a time in every man's education when he arrives at the conviction that envy is ignorance; that imitation is suicide; that he must take himself for better, for worse, as his portion; that though the wide universe is full of good, no kernel of nourishing corn can come to him but through his toil bestowed on that plot of ground

which is given him to till. The power which resides in him is new in nature, and none but he knows what he can do, nor does he know until he has tried. . . .

Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members. Society is a joint-stock company, in which the members agree for the better securing of his bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs.

Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. . . .

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words, and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said today. "Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood." Is it so bad, then, to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood. . . .

The civilized man has built a coach, but has lost the use of his feet. He is supported on crutches, but lacks so much support of muscle. He has got a fine Geneva watch, but he has lost the skill to tell the hour by the sun. A Greenwich nautical almanac he has, and so, being sure of the information when he wants it, the man in the street does not know a star in the sky. The solstice he does not observe; the equinox he knows as little; and the whole bright calendar of the year is without a dial in his mind. His notebooks impair his memory; his libraries overload his wit; the insurance office increases the number of accidents; and it may be a question whether machinery does not encumber; whether we have not lost by refinement some energy, by a Christianity intrenched in establishments and forms some vigor of wild virtue. For every Stoic was a Stoic; but in Christendom, where is the Christian?

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why does Emerson think that flowers and fruits are always fit presents? Does he approve of giving necessities? jewelry? handkerchiefs? Under what circumstances do you think he would approve or disapprove of the following as gifts: a check, winter underwear, a gold bracelet, a photograph, an embroidered lunch cloth, a corsage bouquet, a book of poetry, a necktie?

2. What difficulties does he see in receiving gifts? In the light of this essay what criticisms can you make of some of our common practices in Christmas giving? Do you disagree with Emerson on any point? If so, what?

3. Name two or three persons conspicuous in public life today who you think could be called gentlemen according to Emerson's definition. Name two or three who could not. Defend your answers.

4. What difference is there between a friend as Emerson defines one and a friend in the common use of the word as an acquaintance? Do you think that most school friendships stand the test of Emerson's definition?

5. Give examples from your own experience to illustrate some of the general statements made about compensation. Would you agree with Emerson that there are *always* compensations in life? Give illustrations to prove your point. (See poem "Compensation," page 475.)

6. By what kind of people is Emerson's message of self-reliance most needed? Do you feel that it is needed in your high school? Is it needed generally in the country today? Prove your points by examples.

7. What dangers would there be to society if Emerson's words on self-reliance were taken too literally? From what you know of Emerson do you think he is sanctioning lawbreaking? Why or why not?

8. Consider, not necessarily for class discussion, but in your own mind, ways in which Emerson's ideas in any of these essays might enter into your own attitudes or actions.

9. Vocabulary: "Nature," profane; "Friendship," dissimulation, paradox, ingenuity, reiterated; "Compensation," faculty; "Self-Reliance," integrity, nonconformist, hobgoblin.

*For Ambitious Students*

10. Look up the lives of the great men mentioned at the end of the selection "Self-Reliance" to find out in what ways they were misunderstood. Suggest other names of great men in history today who have been misunderstood.

11. If you have found the paragraphs from the essays challenging, try reading the essays entire. Others which might interest you are "Experience," "Character," "Politics," "Heroism," "Love," "The American

Scholar." If you find the essays too difficult, you might enjoy *The Heart of Emerson's Journals*, where you will find bits of his philosophy interspersed with the daily happenings of his life.

## HENRY DAVID THOREAU (1817-1862)

One of Emerson's friends (and, indeed, in the sense he meant in his essay) was Henry David Thoreau, a native of Concord. At one time Thoreau was also Emerson's gardener, thus demonstrating the simple democratic life of the village. Of course, he was *no ordinary gardener*. By education he was a Harvard graduate; by inherited trade, a pencil maker; by disposition, the most complete illustration imaginable of Emerson's theory of independence and self-reliance. He did what he wanted when he wanted — read, studied, lectured, surveyed land, carpentered, tutored, helped to edit Emerson's paper, the *Dial*, roamed up into Maine or Canada or out West, and occasionally fell back on pencil making. Once while in Minnesota he failed to appear at a reception given in his honor. In the light of ordinary social standards he may seem queer, but there is something delightfully refreshing in the simple naturalness and complete independence of the man.

Lover of freedom though he was, he once went to jail rather than pay a tax of which he disapproved. The story goes that Emerson called at the jail and, addressing him through the window, said, "Henry, aren't you ashamed to be inside those bars?" Thoreau replied, "Mr. Emerson, aren't you ashamed to be *outside* these bars?" To the prisoner's great annoyance his relatives paid the tax for him and he was freed.

In 1845 Thoreau made an experiment in living in the woods which has become so famous that many people think of him as a hermit who spent all his life in the woods. On the contrary, the experiment lasted only two years, and during that period he made frequent excursions into town. Walden Pond, a beautiful little lake with high wooded shores, is only a few miles from Concord. Here Thoreau retired and built himself a hut for the purpose of having leisure and solitude for writing. Incidentally he proved that the money expenditure for giving himself a happy life was exceedingly small. "Most of the luxuries," he said, "and many of the so-called comforts of life, are not only not indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind." His carefully kept accounts show a cost of \$28.12½ for the hut itself, and during eight months \$8.74 for food, \$8.40¾ for clothes, and \$2 for oil and household utensils. He could earn a life of leisure by short periods of toil. "It is not necessary," he said, "that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless

he sweats easier than I do." Of course, he had no wife and children, which makes a difference; besides, the time was the middle of the nineteenth century

The following extract from the book written about his experiment, *Walden* (published 1854), shows the thoughtful observations he made of the wood life about him. He was the first of our American school of nature writers (except for Audubon, the student of birds). Not quite a scientific naturalist like his successors John Muir and William Beebe, Thoreau emphasized rather the philosophical basis of simple outdoor living

### BRUTE NEIGHBORS

IT IS remarkable how many creatures live wild and free though secret in the woods, and still sustain themselves in the neighborhood of towns, suspected by hunters only. How retired the otter manages to live here! He grows to be four feet long, as big as a small boy, perhaps without any human being getting a glimpse of him. I formerly saw the raccoon in the woods behind where my house is built, and probably still heard their whinnying at night. Commonly I rested an hour or two in the shade at noon, after planting, and ate my lunch, and read a little by a spring which was the source of a swamp and of a brook, oozing from under Brister's Hill, half a mile from my field. The approach to this was through a succession of descending grassy hollows, full of young pitch pines, into a larger wood about the swamp. There, in a very secluded and shaded spot, under a spreading white pine, there was yet a clean, firm sward to sit on. I had dug out the spring and made a well of clear gray water, where I could dip up a pailful without roiling it, and thither I went for this purpose almost every day in midsummer, when the pond was warmest. Thither, too, the woodcock led her brood, to probe the mud for worms, flying but a foot above them down the bank, while they ran in a troop beneath; but at last, spying me, she would leave her young and circle round and round me, nearer and nearer till within four or five feet, pretending broken wings and legs, to attract my attention, and get off her young, who would already have taken up their march, with faint, wiry peep, single file through the swamp, as she directed. Or I heard the peep of the young when I could not see the parent bird. There too the turtledoves sat over the spring, or fluttered from bough to bough of the soft white pines over my head; or the red squirrel, coursing down the nearest bough, was particularly familiar and inquisitive. You only need sit still long enough

in some attractive spot in the woods that all its inhabitants may exhibit themselves to you by turns.

I was witness to events of a less peaceful character. One day when I went out to my woodpile, or rather my pile of stumps, I observed two large ants, the one red, the other much larger, nearly half an inch long, and black, fiercely contending with one another. Having once got hold they never let go, but struggled and wrestled and rolled on the chips incessantly. Looking farther, I was surprised to find that the chips were covered with such combatants, that it was not a *duellum*<sup>1</sup> but a *bellum*,<sup>2</sup> a war between two races of ants, the red always pitted against the black, and frequently two red ones to one black. The legions of these Myrmidons<sup>3</sup> covered all the hills and vales in my woodyard, and the ground was already strewn with the dead and dying, both red and black. It was the only battle which I have ever witnessed, the only battlefield I ever trod while the battle was raging; internecine war; the red republicans on the one hand, and the black imperialists on the other. On every side they were engaged in deadly combat, yet without any noise that I could hear, and human soldiers never fought so resolutely. I watched a couple that were fast locked in each other's embraces in a little sunny valley amid the chips, now at noonday prepared to fight till the sun went down, or life went out. The smaller red champion had fastened himself like a vise to his adversary's front, and through all the tumblings on that field never for an instant ceased to gnaw at one of his feelers near the root, having already caused the other to go by the board; while the stronger black one dashed him from side to side, and, as I saw on looking nearer, had already divested him of several of his members. They fought with more pertinacity than bulldogs. Neither manifested the least disposition to retreat. It was evident that their battle cry was "Conquer or die." In the meanwhile there came along a single red ant on the hillside of this valley, evidently full of excitement, who either had dispatched his foe, or had not yet taken part in the battle; probably the latter, for he had lost none of his limbs; whose mother had charged him to return with his shield or upon it. Or perchance he was some Achilles,<sup>4</sup> who had nourished his wrath apart, and had now come to avenge or rescue his Patroclus. He saw this unequal combat from afar — for the blacks were nearly twice the size of the

<sup>1</sup> *duellum*: duel. <sup>2</sup> *bellum*: war. <sup>3</sup> *Myrmidons*: followers of Achilles in the Trojan War. <sup>4</sup> *Achilles*: Greek hero, represented in the *Iliad* as sulking in his tent over a hurt to his pride; but when his best friend, Patroclus, is killed, he forgets his wrath and re-enters the battle in his desire for vengeance.



red — he drew near with rapid pace till he stood on his guard within half an inch of the combatants; then, watching his opportunity, he sprang upon the black warrior, and commenced his operations near the root of his right foreleg, leaving the foe to select among his own members; and so there were three united for life, as if a new kind of attraction had been invented which put all other locks and cements to shame. I should not have wondered by this time to find that they had their respective musical bands stationed on some eminent chip, and playing their national airs the while, to excite the slow and cheer the dying combatants. I was myself excited somewhat even as if they had been men. The more you think of it, the less the difference. And certainly there is not the fight recorded in Concord history, at least, if in the history of America, that will bear a moment's comparison with this, whether for the numbers engaged in it, or for the patriotism and heroism displayed. For numbers and for carnage it was an Austerlitz or Dresden.<sup>1</sup> Concord Fight!<sup>2</sup> Two killed on the patriots' side, and Luther Blanchard wounded! Why, here every ant was a Buttrick — "Fire! for God's sake, fire!" — and thousands shared the fate of Davis and Hosmer.<sup>3</sup> There was not one hireling there. I have no doubt that it was a principle they fought for, as much as our ancestors, and not to avoid a threepenny tax on their tea; and the results of this battle will be as important and memorable to those whom it concerns as those of the battle of Bunker Hill, at least.

I took up the chip on which the three I have particularly described were struggling, carried it into my house, and placed it under a tumbler on my window sill, in order to see the issue. Holding a microscope to the first-mentioned red ant, I saw that, though he was assiduously gnawing at the near foreleg of his enemy, having severed his remaining feeler, his own breast was all torn away, exposing what vitals he had there to the jaws of the black warrior, whose breastplate was apparently too thick for him to pierce; and the dark carbuncles of the sufferer's eyes shone with ferocity such as war only could excite. They struggled half an hour longer under the tumbler, and when I looked again the black soldier had severed the heads of his foes from their bodies, and the still living heads were hanging on either side of him like ghastly trophies at his saddlebow, still apparently as firmly

<sup>1</sup> Austerlitz, Dresden: battles of Napoleon, attended by terrible loss of life. In the former, 42,000 were killed; in the latter, between 7,000 and 8,000. <sup>2</sup> Concord Fight: the Battle of Concord, which with that of Lexington opened the American Revolution. <sup>3</sup> Blanchard, Buttrick, Davis, Hosmer: natives of Concord participating in the fight, the last two being the only ones killed.

fastened as ever, and he was endeavoring with feeble struggles, being without feelers and with only the remnant of a leg, and I know not how many other wounds, to divest himself of them; which at length, after half an hour more, he accomplished. I raised the glass, and he went off over the window sill in that crippled state. Whether he finally survived that combat, and spent the remainder of his days in some *Hôtel des Invalides*,<sup>1</sup> I do not know; but I thought that his industry would not be worth much thereafter. I never learned which party was victorious, nor the cause of the war; but I felt for the rest of that day as if I had had my feelings excited and harrowed by witnessing the struggle, the ferocity and carnage, of a human battle before my door.

Kirby and Spence<sup>2</sup> tell us that the battles of ants have long been celebrated and the date of them recorded, though they say that Huber is the only modern author who appears to have witnessed them. "Aeneas Sylvius," say they, "after giving a very circumstantial account of one contested with great obstinacy by a great and small species on the trunk of a pear tree, adds that 'this action was fought in the pontificate of Eugenius the Fourth, in the presence of Nicholas Pistoriensis, an eminent lawyer, who related the whole history of the battle with the greatest fidelity.' A similar engagement between great and small ants is recorded by Olaus Magnus, in which the small ones, being victorious, are said to have buried the bodies of their own soldiers, but left those of their giant enemies a prey to the birds. This event happened previous to the expulsion of the tyrant Christiern the Second from Sweden." The battle which I witnessed took place in the Presidency of Polk, five years before the passage of Webster's Fugitive Slave Bill.

Many a village Bose, fit only to course a mud turtle in a victualing cellar, sported his heavy quarters in the woods, without the knowledge of his master, and ineffectually smelled at old fox burrows and woodchucks' holes; led perchance by some slight cur which nimbly threaded the wood, and might still inspire a natural terror in its denizens — now far behind his guide, barking like a canine bull toward some small squirrel which had treed itself for scrutiny, then, cantering off, bending the bushes with his weight, imagining that he is on the track of some stray member of the *jerbilla* family. Once I was surprised to

<sup>1</sup> *Hôtel des Invalides*: famous veterans' home in Paris. <sup>2</sup> Kirby and Spence: English naturalists of the early nineteenth century. Huber was a Swiss naturalist of the same time. The other names given are of persons who lived in the fifteenth century.

see a cat walking along the stony shore of the pond, for they rarely wander so far from home. The surprise was mutual. Nevertheless the most domestic cat, which has lain on a rug all her days, appears quite at home in the woods, and, by her sly and stealthy behavior, proves herself more native there than the regular inhabitants. Once, when berrying, I met with a cat with young kittens in the woods, quite wild, and they all, like their mother, had their backs up and were fiercely spitting at me. A few years before I lived in the woods there was what was called a "winged cat" in one of the farmhouses in Lincoln nearest the pond, Mr. Gillian Baker's. When I called to see her in June, 1842, she was gone a-hunting in the woods, as was her wont (I am not sure whether it was a male or female, and so use the more common pronoun), but her mistress told me that she came into the neighborhood a little more than a year before, in April, and was finally taken into their house; that she was of a dark brownish-gray color, with a white spot on her throat, and white feet, and had a large bushy tail like a fox; that in the winter the fur grew thick and flattened out along her sides, forming strips ten or twelve inches long by two and a half wide, and her chin like a muff, the upper side loose, the under matted like felt, and in the spring these appendages dropped off. They gave me a pair of her "wings," which I keep still. There is no appearance of a membrane about them. Some thought it was part flying squirrel or some other wild animal, which is not impossible, for, according to naturalists, prolific hybrids have been produced by the union of the marten and domestic cat. This would have been the right kind of cat for me to keep, if I had kept any; for why should not a poet's cat be winged as well as his horse?

In the fall the loon (*Colymbus glacialis*) came, as usual, to molt and bathe in the pond, making the woods ring with his wild laughter before I had risen. At rumor of his arrival all the Milldam sportsmen are on the alert, in gigs and on foot, two by two and three by three, with patent rifles and conical balls and spyglasses. They come rustling through the woods like autumn leaves, at least ten men to one loon. Some station themselves on this side of the pond, some on that, for the poor bird cannot be omnipresent; if he dive here he must come up there. But now the kind October wind rises, rustling the leaves and rippling the surface of the water, so that no loon can be heard or seen, though his foes sweep the pond with spyglasses, and make the woods resound with their discharges. The waves generously rise and dash angrily, taking sides with all waterfowl, and our sportsmen must beat a retreat to town and shop and unfinished jobs. But they were

too often successful. When I went to get a pail of water early in the morning I frequently saw this stately bird sailing out of my cove within a few rods. If I endeavored to overtake him in a boat, in order to see how he would maneuver, he would dive and be completely lost, so that I did not discover him again, sometimes, till the latter part of the day. But I was more than a match for him on the surface. He commonly went off in a rain.

As I was paddling along the north shore one very calm October afternoon, for such days especially they settle onto the lakes, like the milkweed down, having looked in vain over the pond for a loon, suddenly one, sailing out from the shore toward the middle a few rods in front of me, set up his wild laugh and betrayed himself. I pursued with a paddle and he dived, but when he came up I was nearer than before. He dived again, but I miscalculated the direction he would take, and we were fifty rods apart when he came to the surface this time, for I had helped to widen the interval; and again he laughed long and loud, and with more reason than before. He maneuvered so cunningly that I could not get within half a dozen rods of him. Each time, when he came to the surface, turning his head this way and that, he coolly surveyed the water and the land, and apparently chose his course so that he might come up where there was the widest expanse of water and at the greatest distance from the boat. It was surprising how quickly he made up his mind and put his resolve into execution. He led me at once to the widest part of the pond, and could not be driven from it. While he was thinking one thing in his brain, I was endeavoring to divine his thought in mine. It was a pretty game, played on the smooth surface of the pond, a man against a loon. Suddenly your adversary's checker disappears beneath the board, and the problem is to place yours nearest to where his will appear again. Sometimes he would come up unexpectedly on the opposite side of me, having apparently passed directly under the boat. So long-winded was he and so unweariable, that when he had swum farthest he would immediately plunge again, nevertheless; and then no wit could divine where in the deep pond, beneath the smooth surface, he might be speeding his way like a fish, for he had time and ability to visit the bottom of the pond in its deepest part. It is said that loons have been caught in the New York lakes eighty feet beneath the surface, with hooks set for trout — though Walden is deeper than that. How surprised must the fishes be to see this ungainly visitor from another sphere speeding his way amid their schools! Yet he appeared to know his course as surely under water as on the surface, and swam much

faster there. Once or twice I saw a ripple where he approached the surface, just put his head out to reconnoiter, and instantly dived again. I found that it was as well for me to rest on my oars and wait his reappearing as to endeavor to calculate where he would rise; for again and again, when I was straining my eyes over the surface one way, I would suddenly be startled by his unearthly laugh behind me. But why, after displaying so much cunning, did he invariably betray himself the moment he came up by that loud laugh? Did not his white breast enough betray him? He was indeed a silly loon, I thought. I could commonly hear the splash of the water when he came up, and so also detected him. But after an hour he seemed as fresh as ever, dived as willingly, and swam yet farther than at first. It was surprising to see how serenely he sailed off with unruffled breast when he came to the surface, doing all the work with his webbed feet beneath. His usual note was this demoniac laughter, yet somewhat like that of a waterfowl; but occasionally, when he had balked me most successfully and come up a long way off, he uttered a long-drawn unearthly howl, probably more like that of a wolf than any bird; as when a beast puts his muzzle to the ground and deliberately howls. This was his looning — perhaps the wildest sound that is ever heard here, making the woods ring far and wide. I concluded that he laughed in derision of my efforts, confident of his own resources. Though the sky was by this time overcast, the pond was so smooth that I could see where he broke the surface when I did not hear him. His white breast, the stillness of the air, and the smoothness of the water were all against him. At length, having come up fifty rods off, he uttered one of those prolonged howls, as if calling on the god of loons to aid him, and immediately there came a wind from the east and rippled the surface, and filled the whole air with misty rain, and I was impressed as if it were the prayer of the loon answered, and his god was angry with me; and so I left him disappearing far away on the tumultuous surface.

For hours, in fall days, I watched the ducks cunningly tack and veer and hold the middle of the pond, far from the sportsman; tricks which they will have less need to practice in Louisiana bayous. When compelled to rise they would sometimes circle round and round and over the pond at a considerable height, from which they could easily see to other ponds and the river, like black motes in the sky; and, when I thought they had gone off thither long since, they would settle down by a slanting flight of a quarter of a mile onto a distant part which was left free; but what beside safety they got by sailing in the

middle of Walden I do not know, unless they love its water for the same reason that I do.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Make a list of all the different living creatures which Thoreau has observed as indicated in this chapter. Do his observations seem to you wide or limited?

2. In the battle of the ants, how does the author make the ants seem human? How does he show his familiarity with history? with writings on natural science?

3. What evidence do you find of his attitude toward the hunters who came to Walden Pond? It would be interesting to have an informal class debate as to whether hunting for sport is justifiable.

4. When Thoreau records so exactly the time of his observation of the battle of the ants, do you think he was being serious or facetious?

### *For Your Vocabulary*

5. When Thoreau speaks of the loon's *demoniac* laughter (page 292), he is stressing its unearthly quality as well as the evil nature associated with demons. Such laughter sounds as if it could come from the throat of no earthly creature; it is weird and frenzied and sends shivers through the listener. From different languages we get a whole series of adjectives built on words for a superhuman evil creature: *fiendish*, from Anglo-Saxon, which implies great cruelty; *devilish*, also from Anglo-Saxon, which is used of wickedness in general, sometimes rather lightly; and *diabolical*, from Greek or way of French, which implies coldly calculating evil designs. Here is an example of the way English has enriched itself from its various parent languages.

### *For Ambitious Students*

6. For a clever description of the changed appearance of Walden today, see E. B. White's "One Man's Meat" in *Harper's Magazine*, August, 1939.

7. To know more about Thoreau himself consult *The Heart of Thoreau's Journals*, edited by Odell Shepard, and the recent biography *Thoreau* by H. S. Canby. Emerson, Lowell, John Burroughs, and many others have written essays on him.

8. What other American nature writers can you name? A day spent on oral reports about different nature writers would be valuable. Some of the recent biographies of Audubon have been illustrated by excellent reproductions of his famous paintings of birds. See lists on pages 365 and 451.

## OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-1894)

Holmes was one of those persons who choose their ancestors well, for the Quincys, Bradstreets, and other famous New England families were branches on his family tree. That tree continued to bear good fruit in the poet's son, also named Oliver Wendell Holmes (1841-1935), who served almost thirty years as a justice of the United States Supreme Court. Oliver Wendell Holmes, the essayist and poet, except for periods of study abroad, spent his long life of eighty-five years in Boston and Cambridge, where he was the acknowledged wit of the intellectual group. He it was who smilingly dubbed Boston "the hub of the universe" as a dig at the self-satisfaction of some of its citizens. His essay "The Brahmin Caste of New England" analyzes with keen perception the group of intellectual aristocrats — the product of good breeding, financial ease, and advanced education — of which he himself was a typical representative. His genial humanity and irrepressible wit saved him from smugness, which might otherwise have endangered one so favored by circumstance. By profession Holmes was a physician. Practically all his active life was spent as a professor in the Harvard Medical School, and he held the title of professor emeritus during his last twelve years. Writing was more or less incidental to his career, yet it is as a literary man that the American public will remember him. Outside of his professional writing, his work falls into three main types: poetry, conversational essays, and novels. The imprint of his medical study is placed on his novels, which are largely studies of heredity and seldom read today. *Elsie Venner* is the best known of these.

His great contribution to prose is *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* series written for early numbers of the *Atlantic Monthly* at the request of his friend Lowell, its first editor. *The Autocrat* was followed by *The Professor* and later *The Poet at the Breakfast Table*. These papers are usually designated as essays, but they have no real counterpart. They represent a series of conversations, or rather a monologue — for the persons around a boardinghouse breakfast table, though distinct characters, figure largely as background for the autocrat's remarks. Disconnected, indeed, these conversations are, but surprising in the variety of topics and brilliance of language. The following extract from Part I of *The Autocrat* is a good example.

## ON CONVERSATION

THIS BUSINESS of conversation is a very serious matter. There are men whom it weakens one to talk with an hour more than a day's fasting would do. Mark this which I am going to say, for it is as good as a working professional man's advice, and costs you nothing:

It is better to lose a pint of blood from your veins than to have a nerve tapped. Nobody measures your nervous force as it runs away, nor bandages your brain and marrow after the operation.

There are men of *esprit* who are excessively exhausting to some people. They are the talkers who have what may be called *jerky* minds. Their thoughts do not run in the natural order of sequence. They say bright things on all possible subjects, but their zigzags rack you to death. After a jolting half-hour with one of these jerky companions, talking with a dull friend affords great relief. It is like taking the cat in your lap after holding a squirrel.

What a comfort a dull but kindly person is, to be sure, at times! A ground-glass shade over a gas lamp does not bring more solace to our dazzled eyes than such a one to our minds.

"Do not dull people bore you?" said one of the lady boarders — the same who sent me her autograph book last week with a request for a few original stanzas, not remembering that the *Pactolian* pays me five dollars a line for everything I write in its columns.

"Madam," said I (she and the century were in their teens together), "all men are bores, except when we want them. There never was but one man whom I would trust with my latchkey."

"Who might that favored person be?"

"Zimmerman."<sup>1</sup>

The men of genius that I fancy most have erectile heads like the cobra de capello. You remember what they tell of William Pinckney, the great pleader, how in his eloquent paroxysms the veins of his neck would swell and his face flush and his eyes glitter, until he seemed on the verge of apoplexy. The hydraulic arrangements for supplying the brain with blood are only second in importance to its own organization. The bulbous-headed fellows who steam well when they are at work are the men that draw big audiences and give us marrowy books and pictures. It is a good sign to have one's feet grow cold when he is writing. A great writer and speaker once told me that he often wrote with his feet in hot water; but for this, *all* his blood would have run into his head, as the mercury sometimes withdraws into the ball of a thermometer.

You don't suppose that my remarks made at this table are like so many postage stamps, do you — each to be only once uttered? If you do, you are mistaken. He must be a poor creature who does not

<sup>1</sup> The *Treatise on Solitude* is not so frequently seen lying about on library tables as in our younger days. I remember that I always respected the title and let the book alone. [Author's note]



often repeat himself. Imagine the author of the excellent piece of advice "Know thyself" never alluding to that sentiment again during the course of a protracted existence! Why, the truths a man carries about with him are his tools: and do you think a carpenter is bound to use the same plane but once to smooth a knotty board with, or to hang up his hammer after it has driven its first nail? I shall never repeat a conversation, but an idea often. I shall use the same types when I like, but not commonly the same stereotypes.<sup>1</sup> A thought is often original, though you have uttered it a hundred times. It has come to you over a new route, by a new and express train of associations.

Sometimes, but rarely, one may be caught making the same speech twice over, and yet be held blameless. Thus, a certain lecturer, after performing in an inland city, where dwells a *littératrice*<sup>2</sup> of note, was invited to meet her and others over the social teacup. She pleasantly referred to his many wanderings in his new occupation. "Yes," he replied, "I am like the Huma, the bird that never lights, being always in the cars, as he is always on the wing." Years elapsed. The lecturer visited the same place once more for the same purpose. Another social cup after the lecture, and a second meeting with the distinguished lady. "You are constantly going from place to place," she said. "Yes," he answered, "I am like the Huma" — and finished the sentence as before.

What horrors, when it flashed over him that he had made this fine speech, word for word, twice over! Yet it was not true, as the lady might perhaps have fairly inferred, that he had embellished his conversation with the Huma daily during that whole interval of years. On the contrary, he had never once thought of the odious fowl until the recurrence of precisely the same circumstances brought up precisely the same idea. He ought to have been proud of the accuracy of his mental adjustments. Given certain factors, and a sound brain should always evolve the same fixed product with the certainty of Babbage's calculating machine.

What a satire, by the way, is that machine on the mere mathematician! A Frankenstein<sup>3</sup> monster, a thing without brains and without heart, too stupid to make a blunder; which turns out results like

<sup>1</sup> *stereotypes*: casts or plates used in printing. Here it means the exact unchangeable form. <sup>2</sup> *littératrice*: a literary woman. This incident actually occurred to Holmes at Hartford, Connecticut. The lady was Mrs. Sigourney, a well-known writer of that day. <sup>3</sup> *Frankenstein*: the hero of a novel by Mary Godwin Shelley. He created a human monster who committed horrible crimes and who finally destroyed him.

a corn sheller, and never grows any wiser or better, though it grind a thousand bushels of them!

I have an immense respect for a man of talents *plus* "the mathematics." But the calculating power alone should seem to be the least human of qualities, and to have the smallest amount of reason in it; since a machine can be made to do the work of three or four calculators, and better than any one of them. Sometimes I have been troubled that I had not a deeper intuitive apprehension of the relations of numbers. But the triumph of the ciphering hand organ has consoled me. I always fancy I can hear the wheels clicking in a calculator's brain. The power of dealing with numbers is a kind of "detached lever" arrangement, which may be put into a mighty poor watch. I suppose it is about as common as the power of moving the ears voluntarily, which is a moderately rare endowment.

Little localized powers, and little narrow streaks of specialized knowledge, are things men are very apt to be conceited about. Nature is very wise; but for this encouraging principle how many small talents and little accomplishments would be neglected! Talk about conceit as much as you like, it is to human character what salt is to the ocean; it keeps it sweet, and renders it endurable. Say rather it is like the natural unguent of the seafowl's plumage, which enables him to shed the rain that falls on him and the wave in which he dips. When one has had *all* his conceit taken out of him, when he has lost *all* his illusions, his feathers will soon soak through, and he will fly no more.

"So you admire conceited people, do you?" said the young lady who has come to the city to be finished off for — the duties of life.

I am afraid you do not study logic at your school, my dear. It does not follow that I wish to be pickled in brine because I like a salt-water plunge at Nahant.<sup>1</sup> I say that conceit is just as natural a thing to human minds as a center is to a circle. But little-minded people's thoughts move in such a small circle that five minutes' conversation gives you an arc long enough to determine their whole curve. An arc in the movement of a large intellect does not sensibly differ from a straight line. Even if it have the third vowel as its center, it does not soon betray it. The highest thought, that is, is the most seemingly impersonal; it does not obviously imply any individual center.

Audacious self-esteem, with good ground for it, is always imposing. What resplendent beauty that must have been which could

<sup>1</sup> Nahant: a coast town in Massachusetts.

have authorized Phryne<sup>1</sup> to "peel" in the way she did! What fine speeches are those two: "*Non omnis moriar*,"<sup>2</sup> and "I have taken all knowledge to be my province"!<sup>3</sup> Even in common people, conceit has the virtue of making them cheerful; the man who thinks his wife, his baby, his house, his horse, his dog, and himself severally unequaled is almost sure to be a good-humored person, though liable to be tedious at times.

What are the great faults of conversation? Want of ideas, want of words, want of manners, are the principal ones, I suppose you think. I don't doubt it, but I will tell you what I have found spoil more good talks than anything else — long arguments on special points between people who differ on the fundamental principles upon which these points depend. No men can have satisfactory relations with each other until they have agreed on certain ultimata<sup>4</sup> of belief not to be disturbed in ordinary conversation, and unless they have sense enough to trace the secondary questions depending upon these ultimate beliefs to their source. In short, just as a written constitution is essential to the best social order, so a code of finalities is a necessary condition of profitable talk between two persons. Talking is like playing on the harp; there is as much in laying the hand on the strings to stop their vibrations as in twanging them to bring out their music.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Be sure you understand the difference between "autocrat" and "aristocrat." Both apply to Holmes, but not with the same meaning. Find examples in this selection which show in what sense he is an autocrat.
2. Do you agree with his opinion on mathematicians, conceit, conversational faults? Notice the variety of subjects discussed in this short selection. How many do you find in all?

### *For Ambitious Students*

3. Write a short essay suggested to you by this selection, such as:
  - a. A monologue on your views or prejudices
  - b. Breakfast-table conversation as you have observed it

<sup>1</sup> *Phryne*: a famous Greek woman who before many people stripped off all her garments and plunged into the sea, suggesting to Apelles his famous picture of "Aphrodite Anadyomene." <sup>2</sup> *Non . . . moriar*: "I shall not wholly die," a quotation from Horace. <sup>3</sup> *I . . . province*: a famous statement by Francis Bacon.  
<sup>4</sup> *ultimata*: final or fundamental matters.

c. "The Automat of the Breakfast Table" (if you have ever eaten in an automat)

4. If you enjoyed this selection from *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, Chapters VII and XI are recommended for reading.

### WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE (1868-44)

If ever a literary man was identified through his whole life with a single town, that man is William Allen White, and the town is Emporia, Kansas. His birth, his schooling, and his long career as owner and editor of the *Emporia Gazette* have forged such a strong link between his name and that of the town that one hardly thinks of the one without the other. Through Mr. White's grasp of public affairs and penetrating editorials, his newspaper has attained an unusual reputation throughout the country. He has also written essays, biographies, short stories, and novels. His two best-known pieces of fiction are *The Court of Boyville* and *A Certain Rich Man*. But today his biographies of Woodrow Wilson and of Calvin Coolidge (*A Puritan in Babylon*) are more widely read than his fiction.

It is not, however, as a publicist or novelist that we here see him, but as a father. Probably no such remarkable obituary has ever appeared in a newspaper as the one he wrote for his own daughter. Composed when her loss was still fresh enough to have overwhelmed an ordinary man, it nevertheless reveals a self-command and depth of affection which rise above ordinary expressions of grief and give to Mary White a lease of life far beyond her mortal years.

### MARY WHITE

THE Associated Press reports carrying the news of Mary White's death declared that it came as the result of a fall from a horse. How she would have hooted at that! She never fell from a horse in her life. Horses have fallen on her and with her — "I'm always trying to hold 'em in my lap," she used to say. But she was proud of few things, and one was that she could ride anything that had four legs and hair. Her death resulted not from a fall, but from a blow on the head which fractured her skull, and the blow came from the limb of an overhanging tree on the parking.

The last hour of her life was typical of its happiness. She came home from a day's work at school, topped off by a hard grind with the copy on the high-school *Annual*, and felt that a ride would re-

fresh her. She climbed into her khakis, chattering to her mother about the work she was doing, and hurried to get her horse and be out on the dirt roads for the country air and the radiant fields of the spring. As she rode through the town on an easy gallop she kept waving at passers-by. She knew everyone in town. For a decade the little figure with the long pigtail and the red hair ribbon has been familiar on the streets of Emporia, and she got in the way of speaking to those who nodded at her. She passed the Kerrs, walking the horse, in front of the Normal Library, and waved at them; passed another friend a few hundred feet farther on, and waved at her. The horse was walking, and as she turned into North Merchant Street she took off her cowboy hat, and the horse swung into a lope. She passed the Triplets and waved her cowboy hat at them, still moving gaily north on Merchant Street. A *Gazette* carrier passed — a high-school boy friend — and she waved at him, but with her bridle hand; the horse veered quickly, plunged into the parking where the low-hanging limb faced her, and, while she still looked back, waving, the blow came. But she did not fall from the horse; she slipped off, dazed a bit, staggered and fell in a faint. She never quite recovered consciousness.

But she did not fall from the horse, neither was she riding fast. A year or so ago she used to go like the wind. But that habit was broken, and she used the horse to get into the open to get fresh, hard exercise, and to work off a certain surplus energy that welled up in her and needed a physical outlet. That need has been in her heart for years. It was back of the impulse that kept the dauntless little brown-clad figure on the streets and country roads of this community and built into a strong, muscular body what had been a frail and sickly frame during the first years of her life. But the riding gave her more than a body. It released a gay and hardy soul. She was the happiest thing in the world. And she was happy because she was enlarging her horizon. She came to know all sorts and conditions of men. Charley O'Brien, the traffic cop, was one of her best friends. W. L. Holtz, the Latin teacher, was another. Tom O'Connor, farmer-politician, and Rev. J. H. J. Rice, preacher and police judge, and Frank Beach, music master, were her special friends, and all the girls, black and white, above the track and below the track, in Pepville and Stringtown, were among her acquaintances. And she brought home riotous stories of her adventures. She loved to rollick; persiflage was her natural expression at home. Her humor was a continual bubble of joy. She seemed to think in hyperbole

and metaphor. She was mischievous without malice, as full of faults as an old shoe. No angel was Mary White, but an easy girl to live with, for she never nursed a grouch five minutes in her life.

With all her eagerness for the out-of-doors, she loved books. On her table when she left her room were a book by Conrad, one by Galsworthy, *Creative Chemistry* by E. E. Slosson, and a Kipling book. She read Mark Twain, Dickens, and Kipling before she was ten — all of their writings. Wells and Arnold Bennett particularly amused and diverted her. She was entered as a student in Wellesley in 1922; was assistant editor of the high-school *Annual* this year, and in line for election to the editorship of the *Annual* next year. She was a member of the executive committee of the high-school Y. W. C. A.

Within the last two years she had begun to be moved by an ambition to draw. She began as most children do by scribbling, in her schoolbooks, funny pictures. She bought cartoon magazines and took a course — rather casually, naturally, for she was, after all, a child with no strong purposes — and this year she tasted the first fruits of success by having her pictures accepted by the high-school *Annual*. But the thrill of delight she got when Mr. Ecord, of the Normal *Annual*, asked her to do the cartooning for that book this spring, was too beautiful for words. She fell to her work with all her enthusiastic heart. Her drawings were accepted, and her pride — always repressed by a lively sense of the ridiculousness of the figure she was cutting — was a really gorgeous thing to see. No successful artist ever drank a deeper draft of satisfaction than she took from the little fame her work was getting among her school-fellows. In her glory, she almost forgot her horse — but never her car.

For she used the car as a jitney bus. It was her social life. She never had a "party" in all her nearly seventeen years — wouldn't have one; but she never drove a block in the car in her life that she didn't begin to fill the car with pickups! Everybody rode with Mary White — white and black, old and young, rich and poor, men and women. She liked nothing better than to fill the car full of long-legged high-school boys and an occasional girl, and parade the town. She never had a "date," nor went to a dance, except once with her brother Bill, and the "boy proposition" didn't interest her — yet. But young people — great spring-breaking, varnish-cracking, fender-bending, door-sagging carloads of "kids" gave her great pleasure. Her zests were keen. But the most fun she ever had in her life was acting as chairman of the committee that got

up the big turkey dinner for the poor folks at the county home; scores of pies, gallons of slaw; jam, cakes, preserves, oranges, and a wilderness of turkey were loaded in the car and taken to the county home. And, being of a practical turn of mind, she risked her own Christmas dinner by staying to see that the poor folks actually got it all. Not that she was a cynic; she just disliked to tempt folks. While there, she found a blind colored uncle, very old, who could do nothing but make rag rugs, and she rustled up from her school friends rags enough to keep him busy for a season. The last engagement she tried to make was to take the guests at the county home out for a car ride. And the last endeavor of her life was to try to get a rest room for colored girls in the high school. She found one girl reading in the toilet, because there was no better place for a colored girl to loaf, and it inflamed her sense of injustice and she became a nagging Harpy to those who, she thought, could remedy the evil. The poor she had always with her, and was glad of it. She hungered and thirsted for righteousness; and was the most impious creature in the world. She joined the Congregational Church without consulting her parents; not particularly for her soul's good. She never had a thrill of piety in her life, and would have hooted at a "testimony." But even as a little child she felt the church was an agency for helping people to more of life's abundance, and she wanted to help. She never wanted help for herself. Clothes meant little to her. It was a fight to get a new rig on her; but eventually a harder fight to get it off. She never wore a jewel and had no ring but her high-school class ring, and never asked for anything but a wrist watch. She refused to have her hair up; though she was nearly seventeen. "Mother," she protested, "you don't know how much I get by with, in my braided pigtails, that I could not with my hair up." Above every other passion of her life was her passion not to grow up, to be a child. The tomboy in her, which was big, seemed to loathe to be put away forever in skirts. She was Peter Pan, who refused to grow up.

Her funeral yesterday at the Congregational Church was as she would have wished it; no singing, no flowers save the big bunch of roses from her brother Bill's Harvard classmen — heavens, how proud that would have made her! — and the red roses from the *Gazette* force — in vases at her head and feet. A short prayer, Paul's beautiful essay on "Love" from the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, some remarks about her democratic spirit by her friend, John H. J. Rice, pastor and police judge, which she would have deprecated if

she could, a prayer sent down for her by her friend, Carl Nau, and opening the service the slow, poignant movement from Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," which she loved, and closing the service a cutting from the joyously melancholy first movement of T'schaikowsky's *Pathetic Symphony*, which she liked to hear in certain moods on the phonograph; then the Lord's Prayer by her friends in the high school.

That was all.

For her pallbearers only her friends were chosen: her Latin teacher, W. L. Holtz; her high-school principal, Rice Brown; her doctor, Frank Foncannon; her friend, W. W. Finney; her pal at the *Gazette* office, Walter Hughes; and her brother Bill. It would have made her smile to know that her friend, Charley O'Brien, the traffic cop, had been transferred from Sixth and Commercial to the corner near the church to direct her friends who came to bid her good-by.

A rift in the clouds in a gray day threw a shaft of sunlight upon her coffin as her nervous, energetic little body sank to its last sleep. But the soul of her, the glowing, gorgeous, fervent soul of her, surely was flaming in eager joy upon some other dawn.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Give some of the details of Mary White's appearance and actions which make her seem like a real girl and not an idealized figure.
2. Would you have liked Mary as a classmate? Point out specific reasons for your answer. To what general type of high-school girl would you say she belonged?
3. How do her favorite authors match up with your own?
4. What was particularly appropriate about her funeral service?
5. Try writing a portrayal of one of your classmates in which vividness is achieved by intimate detail.

#### For Your Vocabulary

6. *Cynic* (page 302) is one of those valuable words for which we have no substitute except to explain the whole idea. A *cynic* is a person who doubts the worth, truth, or virtue of what other people have genuine faith in. It is *cynical* to deny that those who are good are happy. *Cynicism* is this attitude of mocking other people's faith in right and goodness, or doubting the worth of human nature.



## WILLIAM BEEBE (1877- )

Seldom do we find a man who commands the respect of learned research societies and at the same time has sufficient literary style and feeling for picturesque adventure to command the interest of the reading public in his writings. Such a man, however, is William Beebe. He is one of the literary descendants of John James Audubon, who made birds live in words as well as in colors, and of John Muir, who opened our eyes to the mysteries of glaciers and forests. Dr. Beebe is a biologist. He holds the official title of Director of the Department of Tropical Research of the New York Zoological Society, in addition to membership in many learned societies.

Of the twelve major expeditions Dr. Beebe has directed, his best-known have been in two main fields, jungle life and deep-sea life. Both types of exploration have resulted in many fascinating volumes. His most startling experience in the sea has been his descent in a bathysphere, which does for the ocean what the stratosphere balloon does for the air. In the great metal ball with its observation windows of fused quartz (since glass would not withstand deep-sea pressure) Dr. Beebe and a companion descended 3,028 feet into the depths, or about 2,500 feet farther than had been possible before in the most heavily armored suit. This remarkable adventure has been described in his book *Half-Mile Down* (1934). But because of the very depth of this trip we do not get from it the picture of the varied plant and animal life lying nearer the surface as described in *Nonsuch* (1932).

Nonsuch is a small island in the Atlantic Ocean near Bermuda. A short distance south of it Beebe discovered a piece of submerged earth which he believed had once projected above the surface. This he christened Almost Island and above it he anchored his boat "like a double-moored zeppelin over an inaccessible island above water." In a diving suit or often merely a diving helmet, the scientist was able to move freely and naturally among the curious and colorful beings of a strange world, as the following chapter shows.

## ALMOST ISLAND

THE HELMET on, I straightened out and slid down the ladder, reaching out my hand now and then to orient myself. Two swallows en route are usually sufficient to equalize the air pressure in my ears. I touched bottom gently, settled my helmet and looked up. This is probably the most instinctive movement of anyone, beginners or old veteran divers—a desire to make certain that the only line of retreat is open. Daily overhead I saw the amusing keel of the launch, rolling slowly in the swell—the fore and aft ropes looping into blue distance, the long sinuous black snake of a hose, with my

head in its maw and its tail vanishing above the keel. The ladder waved slowly back and forth, from the sand beneath my feet up to heaven, and while I was not privileged to see angels ascending and descending,<sup>1</sup> I did rejoice in the sight of jolly sergeant majors, or abudefdufs as I prefer to call them, with black stripes over green and gold, weaving in and out in my wake. They had already scented the bit of high bait I was carrying and to them I was only the harmless conveyor of something exciting and edible. A last glance up showed two things — first, a rather nice submarine joke, for close on the tail of the last abudefduf hastened a young angelfish and I chuckled and felt that Jacob in his vision had nothing on the realities of Almost Island. Second, I saw a square window opening into my other world — my assistant peering down through the water glass. I waved, and then the whole upper seascape was obliterated by a rush of my breath bubbles and I turned to the affairs of the island.

My island is divided almost equally into sand and reef, and these correspond to all the varied phases of dry physical geography — sand taking the place of deserts, plains, pampas and tundras,<sup>2</sup> and a reef embodying mountains, canyons and jungles.

We do not think of there being weather under water, but if we consider terrestrial weather as heat, cold, dryness, moisture, wind, rain, snow and fog, then my submerged islet has weather in abundance. I may descend in water which feels delightfully warm to my skin but in half an hour I come shivering to the surface with teeth chattering; as to dryness we submariners know nothing, except concerning our face, and when dryness leaves the helmet, we expire or ascend; of moisture we have nothing else but.

Wind and fog are interesting; the latter on land is caused by minute particles of water; while beneath the surface fog is a result of small particles of land. I have visited my island when I could not see more than a yard away — the water was merely diluted sand. A distant gale had sent in great swells which reached down, down, and plowed the sand into deep transverse furrows, while the suspended grains flicked against the glass of my helmet like atoms made visible. To see the reef or a great fish loom up through this pale-blue fog is a sight to be forever remembered. In a heavy swell the water is often filled with fronds and strands of seaweed, torn off by the surge near the surface, and now, like beautiful autumn leaves.

<sup>1</sup> angels . . . descending: The reference is to the story of Jacob's dream, Gen. 28 : 10-20. <sup>2</sup> pampas and tundras: barren plains, the first word applied in South America, the second in the Arctic regions.

eddying back and forth — bits of wine-colored lace, or long fronds shimmering in the diluted sunlight with exquisite opalescence.

Undersea wind is once removed from wind overhead, since it is the motion of water caused in turn by the motion of air. I never realized how absolutely still water could be until I looked out from my bathysphere into the blue quiet a quarter-mile down. In that place there was no such thing actually as plankton,<sup>1</sup> for no matter how slight a power of movement any creature might have, yet even if it shot about only in circles, the movement and direction were its own.

On my island in a heavy wind swell, all of us, the fish and myself, became very nearly plankton, being pushed forward and withdrawn at the will of the water. Six fathoms<sup>2</sup> down day and night are unlike those on land — the former being much shorter. My island is in full illumination from ten to three o'clock, preceded and followed by a prolonged dawn and dusk. It is as though the eternal night of all except the surface film of ocean was reluctant to admit any light. But my eyes become dusk-adapted very soon and even in cloudy weather I can watch my tenants, little and big.

The reef cliffs are sandstone, etched and worn into arches, turrets, alleys, tunnels, wells, canyons and a thousand unnamable forms, by the wind and rain of some past glacial age when all were high and dry. This is overlaid and frescoed with great balls of brain coral, and hung and planted with rainbow-tinted seaweed and purple and brown sea fans and plumes. In and out of the tangled scenery swim hosts of fish, great particolored parrots, surgeons of heavenly blue, angelfish, groupers, rockfish, snappers, agile wrasse of a hundred colors, and small folk by the dozen.

But this is not an ichthyological reconnaissance<sup>3</sup>; it is a visit to Almost Island. Access made easy, what can I do? First and last in importance in our work is concentrated observation — remembered facts of color, movement, feeding, sociability, courtship, abundance; but I wish also to collect any new species I see, or any which defy identification on the fin.

First comes the small trident with a three-foot metal handle. This requires the most careful stalking and yields poorest results, yet I have again and again caught a desired fish close to the reef wall on the sand, and by a very sudden and forceful thrust have impaled my game. I have now, however, relegated Neptune's weapon, to-

<sup>1</sup> plankton: tiny animals and plants drifting in the water. <sup>2</sup> six fathoms: thirty-six feet. <sup>3</sup> ichthyological reconnaissance: a survey of fish.

gether with air rifles, to the island armory of relics. The most efficient arm is a wire arrow projected through a short bit of pipe by means of a large rubber band — a cross between a slingshot and a bow and arrow.

My last foray will serve as a type of submarine collecting. I dropped to the bottom with my arrow sling in my hand and leaning down picked up the trident. There was only a gentle surge, what we might call a water breeze, and I leaned against it and pushed south to my favorite angle. With one hand I lifted myself three feet, found a hollow for my foot and looked around. A short distance ahead was a huge spined urchin, hundreds of its twelve-inch black needles forming an impenetrable chevaux-de-frise.<sup>1</sup> With the trident I jabbed lustily into this mass, threw the instrument behind me on the sand and stepped down again.

Now I performed an acrobatic feat which would win fame and fortune in vaudeville. I waited until the surge was half through the backward push and leaped upward with all my might. Slowly I rose and rose off the sand, higher and higher, being carried all the time slightly back and away from the reef. At my greatest elevation, the surge shifted, hung on dead center a moment, and then carried me forward and over the edge of the wall of coral and sea plumes. My gentle descent had already begun so that at the end of the trajectory<sup>2</sup> I found myself close to the place from which I had chosen to operate. Keeping an upright balance was the only thing to be careful about en route, but at the minute of landing it was necessary to dig in at once. With all my fingers, and my feet in their mobile, rubber-soled sneakers, I grasped every projection possible. In this case I found I could even jam an angle of the helmet against an overhanging corner. All this was to prevent my being swept off the reef by the retreating surge, and to guard against scraping in the opposite direction on razor-sharp corals and still more unpleasant spiny urchins. The one I had stabbed was close by, and the stream of luscious odor-taste pouring forth had already proved a magnet to a school of sergeant majors. Fish are like vultures and when they see an excited mob of abudedefdufs milling around a certain spot, no hint of odor or taste is needed to urge them to hurry to the place. The sequence is much the same as a light in the water at night, or a great jungle tree felled in the tropics — first come the smaller creatures, then the larger, and

<sup>1</sup> *chevaux-de-frise*: literally "horses of Friesland"; a military defense of crossing spikes. <sup>2</sup> *trajectory*: the path of an object hurled by a force outside itself.

finally the great carnivores<sup>1</sup> who are attracted not by the rule of bait, or light, or bark, but by the chance of feeding on the mob itself.

I sat with rubber sling drawn taut, feet braced against the surge, but body and head giving as much as possible to it. Here is a real undersea rhythm, not found anywhere else, to which every fish and floating form of life, every loose strand of weed or plume, all with one impulse, swing slowly first in one direction, then all back again. I aimed at fish after fish, and then an unusually colored rockfish drifted out from between my legs and I let go. He was larger and stronger than I thought and with a half-dozen tremendous flicks he tore loose. Instead of fleeing, he turned and snapped at the arrow point, which still held several scales.

Smaller fish were easy to hold when once the arrow was well through, and the astonishing thing was that after being shaken off into a pail they recovered, and later in an aquarium swam upright and healed quickly. When an arrow merely grazed the side of a fish, it invariably turned and bit at the weapon and then swam off and rubbed its scaleless patch against coral and reef. A badly wounded fish which escaped illustrated one of the fundamental laws of this underworld — one which holds in all the places and oceans where I have dived. An uninjured fish is comparatively safe, but an injured one is attacked and killed by every carnivorous fish in sight, including the members of its own school. Even the parrots and the surgeons mill excitedly about and seem to deplore the fact that they are vegetarians and can take no part in this summary execution. To us it seems cruel, or a better term perhaps is inhuman, in the real meaning of the word. If our far-distant ancestors had not kept the race fit in some such way, perhaps we would not today have the stamina to carry on and yet cherish our weaklings and cripples, wage war with poison gas instead of clubs and too often forget the sheer joy of hard creative work.

The most successful method of individual collecting on Almost Island is with a fish pole and a dynamite cap at the end. "Fisher-man's luck" is a truism where traps, nets and angling are concerned, but this underwater shooting which I have invented elevates the collecting of fish into the realm of true sport.

On one of my last descents I located two schools of young fish. I had a hand net, but I might as well have tried to capture a pheasant on the wing with a butterfly net. The net swung so slowly through this dense medium that the youngsters did not even hurry, they simply slipped to one side into safety.

<sup>1</sup> carnivores: flesh-eating animals.

I ascended swiftly, asked for the dynamite cap, and descended. Sand once more underfoot, I saw the fish pole standing upright beside me. With my net in my belt, the pole in my right hand, the insulated electric wire in the other, I was ready for action. I drifted slowly toward the smaller school of iridescent fish, stretched out my pole into their midst as far as I could, turned my head and pulled thrice on a small rubber cable. Instantly my ears were deafened and my body and limbs tingled as from a wholesale electric shock. I invariably felt of the edges of the glass after an explosion to see if all was right. Formerly I used to rest the apparatus on a bit of projecting reef and placing some bait near the cap, fire it from a distance. Now I do not mind holding the end of the five-foot pole, but as yet I have not been able to summon sufficient courage to face the explosion.

I dropped the pole and it was drawn swiftly up; then I began to weave the net back and forth in the water, scooping in the floating silvery motes. I dared not stop the movement or the net would turn inside out. I found small fish of other species drifting a little distance away, but I had to work fast, for the fish were usually only stunned and soon began to recover. In such fashion I gathered fifty odd and on deck we found they were beautiful little pear-shaped infants, all shining gold and silver with enormous gleaming eyes, blessed with the title of *Pempheris*, but no popular name.

A more exciting use of the dynamite cap was in shooting larger fish, and this hunting demanded every bit of my skill; the search for and the discovery of some desired species, the cunning stalk over sand and reef, both hunter and game at the mercy of the swell, and finally the advance of the little red lozenge, the signal, the invariable flinching and the instant pursuit and capture of the upturned fish, to forestall any of its fellows who would at once rush in to the attack. With this sport and that of shooting flying fish from the bow of a launch, no game-bird hunter away from his coverts or preserves or jungles need be bored.

At first sight the sand appeared barren as a desert, but I spent many dives sitting or lying as flat as my helmet would permit, watching the tenants of the shifting grains. At certain angles and strength of current and tide, the very furrows seem to be alive — having movement and rhythm, and I am sure if I had a microphone I could hear the sand grains singing together.

I once sat far out on the flat, white expanse when the water was quite clear. I could feel the very slight push and slack of the swell, but the surface of the sand was troubled with a wholly different force.

When my whole being was impelled forward, the crests of the furrows beyond me loosened, thousands of glittering motes rose a little, then tumbled down the slope and up the flank of the succeeding furrow. I stopped calling them furrows and recognized them as new and strange waves, tuned, like my own actions, into slow-motion imitations of our corresponding activities in another world. I saw that the sand waves were not stationary but were very slowly advancing. In five minutes my foot was well covered, and I visualized slow entombment if I stayed long enough, the creeping-up and burying by the white arenaceous<sup>1</sup> coverlet — and I knew how fossils must have felt in the making.

It is not easy to see and study the creatures of the sand from a six-foot distance. One must kneel or sit. Again and again a sliver of sand slips from beneath my hand, and a sand goby has shifted its position; or as I walk along, an active snowshoe dodges my step, and a great flounder undulates to safety. The thought of gobies gives me a conceit of sorts, for here in six fathoms I found sand gobies and reef gobies but never tide-pool gobies, and I realized that I — a mere landbound human — had descended well below the realm of these shore fish. I once went to the trouble of carrying down a shore goby in a vial. After considerable difficulty with the cork, due to the increased pressure at this depth, I liberated him, and my ego was pleased to see him streak for the surface. I felt more at home than before, and hailed the sand gobies and blue surgeons and emerald parrots as brethren of the same cast as I — we who could make our way far below where *Bathygobius soporator* was comfortable. Such is submarine snobbishness!

Lizard fish and other sand-colored friends lived about me on the ocean floor, but as I sat quietly, unexpected visitors sometimes passed, paying no attention to this harmless projection seated in mid-sand, periodically spouting a geyser of bubbles. Without warning, two fish came toward me, side by side, each well over three feet in length, graceful and of superb beauty. They were yellowtails — oxidized silver, with a broad golden band along the sides. A yellowtail twelve inches in length is a large yellowtail to the Bermudian angler. These giants had small, highbred heads, arched backs and toward the tail their bodies narrowed like an athlete's waist, and behind all there waved a mighty reversed crescent of a tail. Their movements were effortless, their path in life was assured, their desires distinctly attainable — they know their stuff. For several yards they swam

<sup>1</sup> arenaceous: sandy.

evenly, unhurriedly; then, one after the other, like perfectly synchronized parts of a single bit of mechanism, they dipped to the sand, each scooped up a great mouthful, and on the rise, sent it out in a flurry like dense smoke. Again and again they dipped and puffed, dipped and puffed, until in their wake there was a score of fading gouts of sand—like the vanishing sky blossoms of shrapnel smoke.

These and many others were passing visitors to my island, not to be watched for, because their size was unimaginable, their occupation unforeseen, their very presence wholly unexpected. Others were such permanent residents that I have named localities for them, such as Lobster Alley and Chub Canyon. Our pet lobster is of unusual size, and her antennae are forever protruding from the window of her apartment, well up on a reef wall within a side canyon. Now and then I tweak her horns as I pass and she withdraws in insulted haste.

In Chub Canyon six or eight enormous chubs are always to be found. I do not think that a chub four feet over all has ever been captured in these islands, but here they are; records which would make an angler wild with envy.

With the water clear and free from sand and no fish as far as the eye could see, I once stooped at the foot of the ladder to pick up a net. As I straightened up I got the most terrific shock I can remember underseas, for at first glance I seemed to be completely inclosed by some creature of enormous size. Within a second my eye had resolved the mass into hundreds upon hundreds of chubs, all about a foot in length, which had materialized in mid-water from nothing, and now swam so close that they shut out reef and sand, many of them almost within arm's reach — milling around and around me, apparently absorbed in interest in this being new to their cosmos.<sup>1</sup> After several minutes another idea imbued the thousands, and as one fish, they turned and swam unhurriedly out and around the end of the reef. Five minutes passed before I began my ascent; the experience was too wonderful, the memory too vivid, to be immediately disturbed.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What do you learn from this account of Dr. Beebe's method of descent into the shallower portions of the ocean? How do the dangers of these descents differ from what the average landsman might suppose?
2. Give a brief account of some of the most interesting things he saw.

<sup>1</sup> cosmos: world.



Were there any parts of the life he observed which differed from your previous idea of deep-sea life?

3. Point out details which show that besides his scientific interest Dr. Beebe has an artist's feeling for color and rhythm; that he has a sense of humor.

4. Vocabulary: sinuous, fronds, opalescence, truism, iridescent, evanescent, untoward, cached.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

5. You already know many words made from the Greek *chronos*, meaning time — *chronic*, *chronological*, and others. Beebe uses a slightly rarer but rich one when he likens the movement of a school of fish to the movement of the *synchronized* (page 311) parts of a machine. The prefix *syn* or *sym*, with, is already familiar to you in words like *synonym* and *sympathy*. So *synchronized* means timed with, as the sound track must be synchronized with the film in a talking moving picture. A word from the same stem, *anachronism*, using a prefix meaning against, indicates a violation of facts of time. Shakespeare was guilty of an *anachronism* when he had soldiers talking of gunpowder nearly a century before it was introduced into England. Later in this book you will find mention of an *anachronistic* combination.

### *For Ambitious Students*

6. Colored plates of the deep-sea creatures observed by Dr. Beebe are to be found in *Beneath Tropic Seas*, *Nonsuch*, and *Half-Mile Down*. Examine these or others which you may find in other books.

7. A visit to an aquarium, if possible, will enhance your interest in Dr. Beebe's work. In addition to that in New York where his collections are kept, good exhibits are to be found in a number of cities.

8. If you have ever had experiences diving in a lake or riding in a glass-bottomed boat, give an account to the class.

## J. FRANK DOBIE (1888- )

J. Frank Dobie has dedicated his literary career to preserving the lore and legends of the Southwest. His own words give us some insight into his devotion to his chosen work: "I was born and reared far down the Nueces River in Texas. I grew up among cowmen, cowboys, Mexicans. I knew the life of the ranch, of cattle, of the cotton field. The prickly pear and

the mesquite are yet to me as dear as the heather to the Scotchman or 'The Yellow Violet' to William Cullen Bryant. But no one in all my school life ever directed me to a piece of literature in which one factor of that life down the Nueces River was revealed. Many times did I hear of Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards. Gladly do I acknowledge my debt 'both to Greek and to Barbarian' — but not to Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards. I am but one of thousands. The time is at hand when we shall no longer have to starve for a picture, a tale, a song that tells of the life out of which we have sprung." And truly, since Dobie began to publish his works, no one need starve for a taste of the Southwest in literature. He has brought to his writing finished literary craftsmanship and unparalleled knowledge of his own country. On his vacations from the University of Texas, where he is a professor of English, he roams the Southwest, a welcome visitor at big ranch house or cattle camp out on the range, at home in the shacks of Mexican laborers no less than in the company of scholars, talking, listening, making his gleanings into books that have won a following all over America.

The legends of the lost gold and silver mines of the Spaniards, and of the men who even today spend their lives with an old chart and a pickax in pursuit of buried treasure, are retold in *Coronado's Children*, which was a Literary Guild selection in 1931. *A Vaquero of the Brush Country* recounts the life of one of the great early cattlemen of South Texas, where a thick growth of mesquite, chaparral, and cactus made ranching a very different business from what it was out on the open plains. In 1939 Dobie published another collection of lost mine lore, *Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver*, made up of fact and legend about still more rich treasure once seen and forever after sought in vain. In addition to these and other books Dobie writes many essays about the life and, as he likes to call it, the "flavor" of his beloved Southwest.

Out of his rich knowledge of the life of the cattle country he writes this essay on brands and the part they have played in ranch life.

## THE HERALDRY OF THE RANGE

THE OTHER day a ranchman out in West Texas whose brand is T Half Circle announced that the United States Patent Office had registered it as a trade-mark. Since many cattle raisers nowadays sell their product by mail, the owner's brand on an animal being a guaranty of its standard breeding, other cowmen are likely to have their brands registered as trade-marks. A brand is just that — a trade-mark — though it is also much more, and to it is attached all the sentiment and connotation once borne by coats of arms.

Primarily it is a means of identification, whether against thieves or

among honest men, on the owner's home range or far away. If names and addresses were not so long, they would be branded on cattle. A brand is a seal that stands for a name; and somewhere, with name and address, every legal brand is recorded, just as with the purchaser's name are recorded the make and engine number of every automobile, somewhere.

Just when brands were introduced into the world it would be difficult to say. The claim has often been made that Cortes, conquerer of Mexico, originated branding in America. At Thebes, so it is said, a tomb twenty-five hundred years old has been uncovered bearing among other mural decorations the representation of a cow tied down and a man branding her with a geometric design. The tomb must have been that of an Egyptian cattle king. When Chaucer's pilgrims set out on their immortal journey from London to Canterbury more than five hundred years ago, some of them probably rode on rented horses. At least, horses kept for rent at that time were, says the great historian Jusserand — who cites authority for the statement — "branded in a prominent manner, so that unscrupulous travelers should not be tempted to quit the road and appropriate the steeds." In 1643, before the cattle industry in the Southwest was born, the New Haven, Connecticut, code stipulated how horses should be branded in order to prevent trouble between rival claimants of "horses running together in the woods."

But nowhere have brands been so important to people or so interwoven with their lives as on the ranges of western America. A ranchboy often learns the language of brands earlier than he learns the language of books.


When George Asa was a very small boy living on a big ranch near the Rio Grande, his father began one day to teach him the letters of the alphabet, drawing them on paper with a pencil. He drew A, and George Asa learned it; then B, and George Asa learned it. But when he drew a C and called it, George Asa refused to accept it as a letter.





"Aw, Daddy," he exclaimed, "you're trying to tease me now! That's not a letter at all. That's Mr. Cox's brand."




Mr. Cox was a neighboring ranchman whose brand, a big C, was familiar to George Asa before he knew one letter from another. As a ranchboy he was learning to read brands before he learned his A B C's.



At a one-teacher school out in the mesquite the Friday-afternoon session usually closed with recitations. A frequent recitation began with the well-known injunction to the little star:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star!  
 How I wonder what you are,  
 Up above the world so high  
 Like a diamond in the sky.

One of the school urchins was the son of a rancher who ran the Diamond P brand — . That was the only diamond the lad knew, and he confesses now that he used to study the stars by the hour, trying to catch one of them assuming the diamond shape so familiar to him on the sides of cows and at the hot end of a branding iron. He knew the language of brands better than he knew the language of jewels and poetry.

The brand gives its name to everything on the ranch. The chuck wagon of the Olmos — Elms — Ranch is seldom called the Olmos wagon, but is almost invariably referred to as the "A Dot wagon,"  being the ranch brand. The "cow crowd" working on the Withers range is customarily referred to not as the Withers outfit but as the "Pig Pen outfit"; the Pig Pen — made thus,  — being the Withers brand. A cowboy rides a "Double Circle horse," which is branded . Another cowboy is "one of the Rocking Chair hands" because he works on the Rocking Chair —  — Ranch.

A ranch may be named for its owner, as the Kokernut Ranch; it may be named after a creek that runs through it, as the San Francisco Ranch; it may take its name from some other feature of nature, as the Seven Oaks Ranch. But the greater number of ranches by far take their names simply from the ranch brand: the J A Ranch —  — the Pitchfork —  — the Hundred and One — . Sometimes after a brand is no longer in use some feature of the land keeps its name; although the great 7D outfit has quitted the Pecos forever, 7D Mountain keeps the brand as part of the language of the country.

The very owner of a ranch sometimes loses his name in his brand. There is "Diamond and a Half Hud" of the plains, who signs his checks as W. D. Hudson and gives  as his brand. Colonel B. H. Campbell, a prominent cowman of the Indian Territory who for a time managed the great XIT Ranch of Texas, gave for his brand . It was read as "Barbeque," and "Barbeque Campbell" became known where B. H. Campbell had never been heard of.

As a means of identification the brand envelops all things else on the range. An incident related by Walter Billingsley, an old trail driver, well illustrates this fact.

In 1884 [he says] I took a herd of King Ranch steers from South Texas to Cheyenne, Wyoming. Everything went all right until we crossed the South Platte and reached Fort Sidney, Nebraska. While we held the herd a few miles out from town, I let a bunch of the boys go in to see the sights. Five of them laid out and did not report for work next morning. I rode in, found them, and fired them on the spot. I owed them one hundred and twenty dollars apiece. I had no money to pay them off, and I did not know a soul in Sidney.

My first move was to see the banker. Says I to him: "I'm trail boss for the King Ranch, owned by Captain Richard King and known from Canada to the Rio Grande. I've fired five of the sorriest cowboys that ever rode out of Texas. They are due six hundred dollars, and when they get it they will make you fine citizens and spend it all right here. I want to leave them with you, and I want to draw on Wright and Beverley at Dodge City for the six hundred dollars. Will you cash my draft?"

"Well," says the banker, "you look all right and I am satisfied you are all right, but can't you get someone to identify you?"

"I'm where I never was before and where I never expect to be again." I replied, "and I don't see a soul in town that I know."

The banker seemed awful anxious to accommodate me, and I sure did not want to hire those cowboys back just because I couldn't pay them off. I just wasn't going to give them the whip hand over me that way.

"Suppose you look around a little and see if you can't strike somebody you know," the banker concluded, "and then come back."

I went out. My mind was made up. I rounded up the men I'd fired and said, "Follow me and get your money."

We galloped to camp. "Load up and hitch up," I says to the cook, "and follow me."

Then I called the horse wrangler. "Drive up that *remuda* of saddle horses," I says to him, "and follow the chuck wagon."

When we were all ready we struck a high trot for town, and a sight we must have made — me in the lead, those five sorry cowboys swinging after me, then the chuck wagon with six mules hitched to it, and then one hundred and fifty saddle horses with the *remudero* and a couple of other hands driving them. I drew up at the bank and the outfit halted.

"Come here!" I yelled to the banker, who was already at the door. "Come out here and look at my identification!"

He came a-laughing.

"Now," says I, "I guess you know what the King Ranch brand is — Running W on the side and K on the jaw. Well, there's one hundred and fifty saddle horses branded K W. There's a wagon with K W branded on the sideboards, branded on the chuck box, branded all over everything. Look at the cook's saddle on that near wheel mule, and you'll see K W on it. In fact, everything and everybody in this outfit is branded K W."

The banker was impressed all right. He shelled out the six hundred

dollars right away. I paid off the quitters; they unsaddled right there, turned their horses into the *remuda*, took their bedding out of the wagon, and the Running W outfit rolled its tail on for Cheyenne.

The average cow hand is so conscious of brands that in season and out of season, appropriately and inappropriately, consciously and unconsciously, he brands whatever he comes across. He whittles brands on sticks; he burns them into the planks of branding chutes, on pasture gates, on the anchor posts of windmill towers. He smears them with axle grease across the doors of barns and garages. He paints them with charcoal on the rock walls of canyons in which he has made a campfire. He carves them into his spur straps, leggings, and saddle — above all, into his boot tops. More pistols were etched with cattle brands than were ever notched for dead victims. Many a cook has stenciled the ranch coat of arms into the top crust of that gala-day treat — a wild-plum cobbler. Ranchboys are incorrigible when it comes to carving brands on their desks at school. They play ranch, and with baling wire for running irons brand oak balls, the sawed-off tips of horns, spools, and other objects used to represent cattle and horses.

An old-time, dyed-in-the-wool cowman took pride in nothing more than in his memory for brands, and good cowmen still take the same pride. There are hotel clerks who never forget a face, scholars who never falter on a date, and automobile salesmen who hold in mind the engine number of every car sold or inspected. One must marvel with Mark Twain at the memory of a trained Mississippi River steamboat pilot. But the memory of a top brandman surpasses any other kind of memory I have ever met or heard of. It is more than memory; it is an instinct for cattle. Still riding the range are men who can count a hundred head of mixed cattle as they string along, and then from memory classify them and give every brand correctly.

Some of the cattle inspectors operating today in stockyards and on the range can recognize, with only an occasional reference to their brandbooks, literally thousands of brands. They say that Lod Calohan, head inspector for the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers' Association at the Kansas City stockyards, can tell what brand an animal had on it by tasting the beef.

Deciphering and remembering the letters, figures, curves, and other configurations that make up brands is not enough. The thorough-going rangeman is a master of brand nomenclature, on the esoteric principles of which somebody ought to write a grammar. Generally,

be it said, brands read from top to bottom and from left to right. A majority of the cattle brands in use are so simple that nearly anyone, once he has mastered a few principles, can "call" them properly. The brand **H4** can be nothing else than "H Four"; **HD** will easily be conceived to be the "H Triangle." But only the initiated denominate **I** as "Lazy H," or **Σ** as "Crazy Three." Any letter "too tired to stand up" is "lazy"; though if it is merely in an oblique position and not on its back, it is "tumbling." **T** or **⤿** is "Tumbling T."

A letter with curves at the end is often said to be "running." The most noted illustration of this principle is the "Running W" brand — **~** — of the million-acre King Ranch. A letter or figure with "wings" to it is "flying" — thus, **W** is the "Flying W."



Brands "walk," "drag," "swing," and "rock" as well as they "run" or "fly." **F** is the "Walking F" and **A** is the "Walking A." The projection at the bottom of the figure makes **Z** the "Drag Seven." **L** suspended from a curve — **⤿** — becomes the "Swinging L." Many brands are on rockers, as the "Rocking H" — **H**. But if the rocker is unjoined, then it is a half or quarter circle; so **H** is "H Half Circle." One of the most historic brands of the West is the "Rocking Chair" — **h**.

Sometimes a brand rests on a "bench," as **Y**, the "Y Bench." V-shaped prongs attached to some part of a letter make it forked. **S** is "Forked S," but **N** is not "Forked N"; it is "Forked Lightning."



A straight mark is usually called a "bar"; but if it is very long or leaning at an angle to the normal horizontal position, it is apt to be called a "slash." The **/** is called "Cut and Slash." **—** is "Bradded Dash." John Chisum, noted cowman of the Pecos, branded twenty thousand calves each year with a straight line running from shoulder to tail, and that "bar" was known all over the cattle country as the "Fence Rail." A brand burner added to it thus **—o—**, and the result was known both as "Knot on the Rail" and "Bug on the Rail." **o—o** might be "O Bar O," but it isn't. It is "Hobble O," for it resembles a pair of horse hobbles.

One time a rancher started a new brand made thus, **G**. Somebody asked him what he called it. "*Quien sabe?*" ("Who knows?") he replied. And as the "Quien Sabe" brand it was known ever after-

ward and was placed on tens of thousands of cattle. Looking through a mixed herd of cattle or a brand book, one might note many brands of apparently a *quien sabe* nature; but somehow the rangemen have usually found a name for the most nameless device.

Fanciful designs frequently have fanciful names that could never be guessed even by good cowmen not familiar with the local interpretation of the brand. For instance,  was known on the Colorado River in Texas as "Pot Hooks." When the owners moved their cattle to a new ranch several hundred miles to the southwest, the brand took the name of "Straddle Bug." A well-known brand was the "Gourd and Vine." It was run in this manner , so as to cover the whole side of an animal; and while everybody called it "Gourd and Vine," no stranger would at first sight of it ever guess the name.

Many owners use their initials in brands and sometimes even spell out their names. John M. Doak took **DOK** for his brand. With elegant simplicity Mrs. Katie Barr spelled out her whole name in **KT**, "KT Bar." Jack Barber approached the sound of his last name with **BR**. Pete Coffin had both his jest and his name in **P**. A man by the name of Hightower used **HI**. Napoleon Daniel embodied in a brand his nickname — **BONY**. Ingenious but a little puzzling was Mr. Float's brand — **F**, which does spell **FLOT**.

Instead of telling the owner's name, a brand may suggest something of his biography. J. C. Studer was a blacksmith working for the Santa Fe Railroad when it was built across the Texas Panhandle. He fell in love with the country, invested his savings in land and cattle, and out of respect for his trade adopted an anvil —  — as his brand. One of the sea captains who used to sail in the Gulf of Mexico quit the sea for ranching; but he could not forget the old seafaring life, and his "Ship's Anchor" brand —  — was a tribute to the memory.

There are legendary tales about brands, as there are about everything else with which man has had a vital connection. One of the most widely known of these legends tells how the "Four Sixes" — **6666** — originated.

Back in the early days a young cowboy by the name of Burk Burnett, who was just getting his start in cattle, rode into the village of Fort Worth one morning bent on indulging his skill in the favorite game of the range — poker. At one of the many gaming tables, then wide open to the public, he invested in a sombrero full of chips. At



first he lost heavily; then the game became variable; about midnight his luck had changed, and by daylight he had a barrellful of money.

One of his opponents was desperate. "Burk," he said, "I'm broke, but I'll play my ranch and cattle against your pile."

"You've made a bet," was the reply.

On the deal Burk Burnett drew two sixes. He discarded three other cards, keeping the pair. Then he drew two more sixes. The four sixes won the ranch. Immediately, the story goes on, Burnett re-branded the cattle he had won with his lucky number — 6666. In time he increased his holdings until he had three hundred thousand acres in the Indian Territory stocked with Four Sixes cattle, besides an enormous ranch in North Texas. An oil field came in on his land and a boom city named Burkburnett sprang up. When his widow died, only a few years ago, she left several million dollars to Texas Christian University — probably the best poker hand that a Christian institution ever drew.

Whatever the facts, the poker story has fastened itself upon the imagination of thousands of recounters and will live for a long time.

No account of brands would be complete without consideration of the art of burning out brands. It was an art that reached the height of development during the days of open range, but it is by no means lost yet. Before the practice of counterbranding went out, a thief might void a brand by running a bar through it or by counterbranding the animal — as if it had been legitimately sold — and then putting his own brand on it. Again, he might rub out the owner's brand by taking a hot smoothing iron and burning all that part of an animal's hide covered by a brand. This was called blotching, or blotting. The result would be an enormous scar or blotch, through which the original lines were apt still to be visible. In any case, the blotch was evidence that the animal had been stolen, though not always could it be ascertained from whom stolen.


The most common practice by far was, and is yet, to run the original brand into something else.

One of the oldest chestnuts in the cow country is the "I See You Too" story. A ranchman somewhere started the **IC** brand. Before long he noticed that certain cattle in his herd wore the brand **ICU**. Not to be outdone, he did a little doctoring himself, and then the whole herd wore the **ICU2** brand. Then there was the fellow who started with **B4** for a brand. A Longhorn neighbor presently claimed that cattle branded **B4U** were his. The king of brand alterers then



rode in, and presently nobody could find on the range anything that was not branded **B4U2**.

If brands could always be added to so easily and if they could be subtracted from as well as added to, the problem of the brand burner would be much simpler; but in brands, as in Scripture, what is writ is writ. In addition to adding a fresh figure or mark to an old device, the brand burner must try to cover up his alterations. For instance, one cattle company gave **7P** — "Seven P" — for a brand. A thief ran it into **7P** — "Seven Up." But expert rangemen can usually detect such mutilations. The new part never has the same look as the old part that has been rebranded.

The classic story of brand burning has, fittingly, to do with the largest ranch the United States of America has known, the **XIT**, the three million acres of which were granted by the State of Texas to the Capitol Syndicate in exchange for the present granite capitol building at Austin. Wherever men talk of brands — and that is wherever range cattle graze — the story of the "Star Cross burn" is told.

Range rustlers had tried and tried to figure out a way to turn **XIT** into another brand that would not give itself away. At last, so the yarn goes, a clever range rider solved the problem. He revealed his secret to no one; he never blurred a brand. He was an artist. Nevertheless, he was finally brought to trial. The evidence was conclusive that he had built up from nothing a herd of cattle branded "Star Cross" —  — but the prosecuting attorney was unable to inform the jury how **XIT** could be altered into that symbol. So the rustler was freed. The **XIT** people were helpless. They offered him five thousand dollars if he would tell them how he achieved the Star Cross and would quit burning it on their cattle. Then the legendary rustler told his secret.

Among the thousands of calves branded each year on the **XIT** Ranch many of them had one or more of the letters imperfectly placed. The rustler looked for animals on which the **T** was slanting.

When he found  he easily ran it into .

Many brand burners have been clever, but probably not one of them ever gained anything by his cleverness. After all, a great majority of the rangemen have always been honest men, and among them brands on cattle have served well the purpose for which they were designed; that is, to identify and maintain ownership. On

ranches cattle are branded today by the millions, just as they were branded during the days of the open range.

If branding could be avoided it would be avoided. Humane societies have protested against the practice; experiments have been conducted with chemical compositions purporting to make an indelible but painless mark. But no substitute has been found for branding. Anyhow, branding is not unduly cruel, and the resultant pain is of short duration. As long as there are ranches, there will be brands — and that will be until millions and millions of acres of rocks and arid soil are made fertile and moist. The heraldry of the range is not obsolete; it is not even obsolescent.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. To understand better the meaning of the phrase "The Heraldry of the Range," look up heraldry and find some examples of coats of arms containing references to events or objects important in the history of the family.

2. Brands have been used as decorative motifs in modern buildings and furnishings in the Southwest. If you live in that region, see how many such uses you can think of. If you have never seen them used, pick out some of the brands that you think would make good decorative motifs.

3. What other professions does Dobie compare with that of "brand-man" in its development of memory? Can you think of professions in your own neighborhood that rely as heavily on trained memory?

### *For Your Vocabulary*

4. The Latin word *nomen*, name, is the basis of many English words. Dobie uses two which at first glance show little resemblance: *nomenclature* (page 317), which means the system of naming in a particular branch of knowledge or art — as botanical *nomenclature* — and *denominate* (page 318), which means to give a certain name to. The noun *denomination* means a group gathered under one name, as Episcopalians. An interesting derivative of *nomen* is the adjective *nominal*, which means in name but not in fact — as the King of England is the *nominal* head of the government; the Prime Minister, the actual head. Can you add to the list of words using this stem?

### *For Ambitious Students*

5. *Fortune* magazine for December, 1933, contains an article on the King Ranch, whose trail boss used the ranch brand for identification to cash a

draft. Reading it, you can find out how justifiable is the comparison of the brand with a nobleman's coat of arms, and also how the modern ranch differs from the old-time one.

6. Besides the books by Dobie mentioned in the introduction, you would enjoy *Tongues of the Monte* and *The Flavor of Texas*. Some of his good essays are "The Last of the Grizzly Hunters," "Wanderlust of the Wild," "The Saga of the Saddle," "Outlaws of the Brush," "Spanish Cow Pony," and "In the Brush Country."

### CHRISTOPHER MORLEY (1890- )

Christopher Morley is an American in whom the English tradition is strong. Not only were his parents both born in England, but he himself, after getting his degree from Haverford College, Pennsylvania, continued his education as a Rhodes scholar at New College, Oxford. One need only read the delightful musings in his volumes called *Shandygaff*, *Mince Pie*, *Plum Pudding*, and *Pipefuls* to realize the rich colorings taken on from his Oxford contacts, like the suffused browns of a seasoned meerschaum.

Upon his return to America he was variously connected with well-known publishing houses, magazines, and newspapers. For years he conducted "The Bowling Green" column in the New York *Evening Post*, thus linking himself with the professional humorists. In recent years he has devoted himself to independent writing, and it must not be forgotten that he has produced distinctive novels, short stories, plays, and verse, as well as many volumes of essays. He has even ventured into the field of play production, having put on some old-fashioned melodramas in New York with details carried out in the manner of a century ago.

But more worth while than knowing these mere facts *about* him, is knowing the man himself through his own words. In this essay from *Off the Deep End* he will take you adventuring with him across the continent.

### THE CENTURY

IN NEW YORK we think of the Twentieth Century Limited as just a train, but in Chicago she is an institution. The Century, as she is affectionately and familiarly called out there, makes her departure from the La Salle Street station with something of the circumstance of a crack liner leaving her pier. Visitors stand along the platform to see her off. Telephone booths, right beside her shining brass observation balcony, are busy until the last moment. There are even telephones in the observation car, disconnected at the final tick. That

brass-railed platform at the end of the train seems, in those parting instants, as romantic as a Shakespearean set. The morale of the whole scene is magnificent. Porters have an air, and are double-tipped for it. The railroad conductor and the Pullman conductor, both stout, elderly, ruddy nabobs, confer like captain and staff captain on the bridge of the *Mauretania*.<sup>1</sup> She pulls out on the tick, and leaps at once into her long smooth stride. Behind you see the second section following, the big locomotives fluttering two green flags. I don't know how passengers, sitting softly in observation or club car, can settle down so promptly to the *Illustrated London News* or *Liberty*. It is all far too exciting.

And, just as in a big liner sailing from New York, as soon as you are off lunch is served. Going along the corridors you are thrilled by the intimate air of all those little compartments. Yourself, a mere occupant of a lower in the usual type of sleeper, feel a little humbled by those apartment-house cars that are all private cabins. You meet the train stenographer; he asks for your name "for the Train Register." "Oh," he says, "there's a gentleman looking for you, Mr. Soandso, a friend of Mr. Blank." (Mr. Blank has been your host in Chicago.) "What space have you got?" *Space*, I have learned, is the technical term for your location on a swell train. He tells me what Mr. Soandso's space is, so I can look him up. I am abashed to admit that I didn't; it was discourteous, but this was my first voyage in the Century and I wanted to brood.

Her morale, I repeat, is magnificent. In the diner the steward gives you a cheerful and apparently recognitory grin. "It's a long time since we had the pleasure of having *you* with us," he says, and of course I am subtly flattered to be thought an alumnus. The officers of this champion train are on generous terms with regular patrons. My friend Mr. Blank, who is an epicure, was once brought a parcel of codfish tongues by the conductor. There are fresh flowers on each table: a rose, two carnations, and a daffodil. The Century celebrates her twenty-fifth anniversary this spring.<sup>2</sup> I suppose when she makes her quarter-century run, on June 15, there will be big doings. All sorts of things have happened on the roads since 1902, and will happen by 1952; yet even in these spacious days of Tin Elizabeth<sup>3</sup> the locomotive still gives us the greatest thrill. I hear much of King

<sup>1</sup> *Mauretania*: one of the largest passenger ships on the Atlantic at the time this was written; companion ship of the famous *Lusitania*, which was sunk during the World War of 1914-18. <sup>2</sup> *this spring*: 1927. <sup>3</sup> *Tin Elizabeth*: The early Ford cars were called in slang "tin Lizzies." The pun on the Elizabethan age is obvious.

Ganaway, the Chicago photographer who has done marvelous pictures of engines. I hope he'll do the Century as she pulls out of La Salle Street on the morning of June 15.

We make our first stop at Elkhart. It's fine to see a squad of oilers and coal passers leap at the engine almost before she has come to a stop and begin hostling her. You stroll up and down the platform for a brief inhale of windy March, try to savor the feeling of Indiana, the green little park, the Civil War statue. You admire the two rotund conductors, like Tweedledum and Tweedledee,<sup>1</sup> still conferring. Then we're off again. The second section pulls in just as we leave. Do they keep it up like that, nip and tuck, all night?

The sweet brown fields of Indiana recede behind us. Chew Mail Pouch, Chew Bag Pipes; red cows, red pigs, red barns. And, if you have been spending a few days with a typical Chicago host, you suddenly find yourself strangely and peaceably weary. I guess there's truth in what the railroad claims about the water-level route; certainly the running is amazingly smooth. Going back to your seat in the car *French Lake*, you find a fat white pillow put there by the Negro porter. You oblique yourself into it. Your mind goes back to the wonders of that amazing city. An apartment high over the lake, a night of gale and sleet, grilled casement windows looking onto the foam of perilous lakes forlorn. The roar of that fresh-water surf sounds even above the roar of the fire in the great chimney throat. Like all genuine Chicagoans, my host believes in going nature one better. His logs are treated with chemicals, the flames are blue and silver and platinum-color. In that gale and draft the fire burns through suddenly. You leave the room for a little while — when you come back it is all burned out; no softly glowing log to linger redly. In the elevator shafts of lake-front apartments the gale screams a fierce Aeolian cry. I wish Shakespeare had known Chicago. And softly, with a little terror even, pondering these things, you fall asleep.

You wake up just entering Toledo. Again a chance for a swig of air. You are thrilled by strange names on cars and engines — *Nickel Plate Road*, *Hocking Valley*, *Père Marquette*. You buy a Toledo paper. An ad amused me — “Girls, carry a spare.” Stocking, they mean. It appears that life in Toledo is hard on hosiery, for you are

<sup>1</sup> **Tweedledum and Tweedledee**: famous twins in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*. In a dispute in the eighteenth century as to the relative merits of two musicians, the satirist John Byrom wrote a poem in which he dubbed the two men Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Carroll took the name from this.

urged to buy stockings "Three to the pair." Then, if a run starts (says the ad) you take your spare from your purse and refill. Just as I was losing myself in Ronald Fraser's *Flower Phantoms* (what an enchanting book!) I noticed a pleasant town. The porter came by. "What is this place?" I asked him. "This is Elyria," he said. That indeed had a Shakespearean sound. "What country, friends, is this?" "This is Illyria, lady."<sup>1</sup>

By dusk the train has settled down to so tranquil and domestic a routine that you have all the settled feeling of an ocean voyage. From the little compartments comes the sound of cardplaying, bursts of cheerful mirth. Yet the Centurions are not too folksy, as on lesser trains. You are not approached, as I was on another limited once, to know if I'd make a fourth at bridge. I said I didn't play bridge. Well, how about poker said the other. I said I didn't play poker. "Do you play anything at all?" was his final attempt. Whatever it might have been I fear I'd have lost.

When you've had a light dinner, and read G. K. Chesterton<sup>2</sup> in the *Illustrated London News*, and remembered to put your watch an hour ahead, you'll find your berth made up. You fall asleep just as you come into Erie.

What happens between Erie and Albany I have no notion. Usually I don't sleep much on trains, but I thank the Century for some eight hours vanished forever from my life — hours of complete nothing, a capsule of eternity. You wake, being on the starboard side, to see a half-moon riding in pale light over a faint rosy epilogue of dawn. You smoke a pipe and pensively overhaul your belongings. Somehow you've lost your collar button, but (like the girls of Toledo) you had a spare with you. Your pride over this makes you quite pleased with yourself. You nap for another hour or so, and then orange juice and scrambled eggs.

I was sorry to see the last of our relay of locomotives leave us at Harmon.<sup>3</sup> It would have been nice for her, I thought, to have had the honor of roaring us proudly to the very end. And I wouldn't have been myself, I reflected ruefully, if I hadn't immediately gone on to find a symbol in the matter. For it is just so with man throughout his life — he's frequently changing engines. For a while, Fun is his motive power; then Earning, or Ambition, or Love, or Family,

<sup>1</sup> "This . . . lady": from Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Illyria was the country in which Viola met with her adventures after her shipwreck. <sup>2</sup> G. K. Chesterton: a noted English critic and essayist who died in 1936. <sup>3</sup> Harmon: Here New York Central trains change from steam engines to electric.

all powerful moguls, keep him all steamed up. Perhaps it is the quiet electric engine, Peace, that brings him at last into his Grand Central Station.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. State some definite points learned about Christopher Morley in this essay which make you feel acquainted with him.
2. Find examples of clever touches of humor in the use of words, such as "I am subtly flattered to be thought an *alumnus*."
3. How does he carry out the comparison with an ocean voyage after his first mention of the *Mauretania*? How is this different from Irving's ocean voyage?
4. How do you like the bit of life philosophy at the end?

### *For Ambitious Students*

5. Composition suggestions:
  - a. Describe some train on which you have ridden.
  - b. Contrast the Century with a crowded local day coach.
  - c. Describe a trip on an airplane if you have had one.
6. Get from some of the railroads information about the changes and improvements in fast trains since the time of this essay, 1927.
7. Read others of Morley's essays and tell the class about them. In general how does their tone differ from that of other authors in this section?

### PAUL DE KRUIF (1890— )

A bacteriologist with marked individuality of expression is in a position to give deserved publicity to a group of men too little known to the world as compared with the generals, authors, statesmen, and prize fighters. These are the scientists. Such a man is Paul de Kruif,<sup>1</sup> who in *Microbe Hunters* can hold one spellbound with the drama of the world known only through the microscope, or show how the thrills of hunting invisible microbes in Africa may exceed those of hunting big game. The success of this book led him to write three other series of biographical essays: *Hunger Fighters*, *Seven Iron Men*, and *Men against Death*. He has also ventured into the field of drama by collaborating with Sidney Howard in writing *Yellow Jack*, a play based on the story of Walter Reed. His latest volumes are concerned with current problems of public health. *Why Keep*

<sup>1</sup> de Kruif: dè Krif.



*Them Alive?* shows the plight of underprivileged children, while *The Fight for Life* leads us along the concerted firing line against disease of recent years.

The following selection from *Microbe Hunters* concerns the fight made by Walter Reed against yellow fever. It is a combination of the biographical essay, the scientific essay, and the lively narrative — hard to classify but fascinating to read. Once you get into it, you will not care by what name it is called — you will just read on and on.

### WALTER REED

EVERYBODY is agreed that Walter Reed — head of the Yellow Fever Commission — was a courteous man and a blameless one, that he was a mild man and a logical: there is not one particle of doubt he had to risk human lives; animals simply will not catch yellow fever!

Then it is certain that the ex-lumberjack, James Carroll, was perfectly ready to let go his own life to prove Reed's point, and he was not too sentimental about the lives of others when *he* needed to prove a point — which might and might not be what you would call a major point.

All Cubans (who were on the spot and ought to know) are agreed that those American soldiers who volunteered for the fate of guinea pigs were brave beyond imagining. All Americans who were then in Cuba are sure that those Spanish immigrants who volunteered for the fate of guinea pigs were not brave, but money-loving — for didn't each one of them get two hundred dollars?

Of course you might protest that fate hit Jesse Lazear a hard knock — but it was his own fault; why didn't he brush that mosquito off the back of his hand instead of letting her drink her fill? Then, too, fate has been kind to his memory; the United States Government named a Battery in Baltimore Harbor in his honor! And that same government has been more than kind to his wife: the widow Lazear gets a pension of fifteen hundred dollars a year! You see, there are no arguments — and that makes it fun to tell this story of yellow fever. And aside from the pleasure, it has to be told: this history is absolutely necessary to the book of *Microbe Hunters*. It vindicates Pasteur! <sup>1</sup> At last Pasteur, from his handsome tomb in

<sup>1</sup> Pasteur: Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), French chemist who made extensive studies in the theory of germs, inoculation, and sterilization. The process of producing pasteurized milk is named for him. His work is described in earlier chapters of *Microbe Hunters*.

that basement in Paris, can tell the world, "I told you so!" Because, in 1926, there is hardly enough of the poison of yellow fever left in the world to put on the points of six pins; in a few years there may not be a single speck of that virus left on earth — it will be as completely extinct as the dinosaurs — unless there is a catch in the fine gruesome experiments of Reed and his Spanish immigrants and American soldiers.

It was a grand co-operative fight, that scotching of the yellow jack. It was fought by a strange crew, and the fight was begun by a curious old man, with enviable muttonchop whiskers — his name was Doctor Carlos Finlay — who made an amazingly right guess, who was a terrible muddler at experiments, who was considered by all good Cubans and wise doctors to be a Theorizing Old Fool. What a crazy crank is Finlay, said everybody.

For everybody knew just how to fight that most panic-striking plague, yellow fever; everybody had a different idea of just how to combat it. You should fumigate silks and satins and possessions of folks before they *left* yellow-fever towns — no! that is not enough: you should burn them. You should bury, burn, and utterly destroy these silks and satins and possessions before they *come into* yellow-fever towns. It was wise not to shake hands with friends whose families were dying of yellow fever; it was perfectly safe to shake hands with them. It was best to burn down houses where yellow fever had lurked — no! it was enough to smoke them out with sulphur. But there was one thing nearly everybody in North, Central, and South America had been agreed upon for nearly two hundred years, and that was this: when folks of a town began to turn yellow and hiccup and vomit black, by scores, by hundreds, every day — the only thing to do was to get up and get out of that town. Because the yellow murderer had a way of crawling through walls and slithering along the ground and popping around corners — it could even pass through fires! — it could die and rise from the dead, that yellow murderer; and after everybody (including the very best physicians) had fought it by doing as many contrary things as they could think of as frankly as they could do them — the yellow jack kept on killing, until suddenly it got fed up with killing. In North America that always came with the frosts in the fall.

This was the state of scientific knowledge about yellow fever up to the year 1900. But from between his muttonchop whiskers Carlos Finlay of Havana howled in a scornful wilderness, "You are all wrong — yellow fever is caused by a mosquito!"

There was a bad state of affairs in San Cristóbal de Habana in Cuba in 1900. The yellow jack had killed thousands more American soldiers than the bullets of the Spaniards had killed. And it wasn't like most diseases, which considerably pounce upon poor dirty people — it had killed more than one-third of the officers of General Leonard Wood's staff, and staff officers — as all soldiers know — are the cleanest of all officers and the best protected. General Wood had thundered orders; Havana had been scrubbed; happy dirty Cubans had been made into unhappy clean Cubans — “No stone had been left unturned” — in vain! There was more yellow fever in Havana than there had been in twenty years!

Cablegrams from Havana to Washington, and on June 25 of 1900 Major Walter Reed came to Quemados in Cuba with orders to “give special attention to questions relating to the cause and prevention of yellow fever.” It was a big order. Considering who the man Walter Reed was, it was altogether too big an order. Pasteur had tried it! Of course, in certain ways — though you would say they had nothing to do with hunting microbes — Walter Reed had qualifications. He was the best of soldiers; fourteen years and more he had served on the western plains and mountains; he had been a brave angel flying through blizzards to the bedsides of sick settlers — he had shunned the dangers of beer and bottle pool in the officers' mess and resisted the seductions of poker. He had a strong moral nature. He was gentle. But it will take a genius to dig out this microbe of the yellow jack, you say — and are geniuses gentle? Just the same, you will see that this job needed particularly a strong moral nature. and then, besides, since 1891 Walter Reed *had* been doing a bit of microbe hunting. He had done some odd jobs of searching at the very best medical school under the most eminent professor of microbe hunting in America — and that professor had known Robert Koch<sup>1</sup> intimately.

So Walter Reed came to Quemados, and as he went into the yellow-fever hospital there, more than enough young American soldiers passed him, going out, on their backs, feet first. There were going to be plenty of cases to work on all right — fatal cases! Dr. James Carroll was with Walter Reed, and he was not what you would call gentle, but you will see in a moment what a soldier-searcher James Carroll was. And Reed found Jesse Lazear waiting for him —

<sup>1</sup> **Robert Koch:** (1843-1910) a German doctor who discovered the germs of tuberculosis and cholera. His work is described in an earlier chapter of *Microbe Hunters*.

Lazear was a European-trained microbe hunter, aged thirty-four, with a wife and two babies in the States, and with doom in his eyes. Finally there was Aristides Agramonte (who was a Cuban) — it was to be his job to cut up the dead bodies, and very well he did that job, though he never became famous because he had had yellow fever already and so ran no risks. These four were the Yellow Fever Commission.

The first thing the commission did was to fail to find any microbe whatever in the first eighteen cases of yellow fever that they probed into. There were many severe cases in those eighteen; there were four of those eighteen cases who died; there was not one of those eighteen cases that they didn't claw through from stem to gudgeon, so to speak, drawing blood, making cultures, cutting up the dead ones, making endless careful cultures — and not one bacillus<sup>1</sup> did they find. All the time — it was July and the very worst time for yellow fever — the soldiers were coming out of the hospital of Las Animas feet first. The commission failed absolutely to find any cause, but that failure put them on the right track. That is one of the humors of microbe hunting — the way men make their finds! Theobald Smith<sup>2</sup> found out about those ticks because he had faith in certain farmers; Ronald Ross<sup>3</sup> found out the doings of those gray mosquitoes because Patrick Manson told him to; Grassi<sup>4</sup> discovered the *zanzarone* carrying malaria because he was patriotic. And now Walter Reed had failed in the very first part — anybody would say it was the most important part — of his work. What to do? There was nothing to do. And so Reed had time to hear the voice of that Theorizing Old Fool, Dr. Carlos Finlay, of Havana, shouting, "Yellow fever is caused by a *mosquito!*"

The commission went to call on Dr. Finlay, and that old gentleman — everybody had laughed at him; nobody had listened to him — was very glad to explain his fool theory to the commission. He told them the ingenious but vague reasons why he thought it was mosquitoes carried yellow fever; he showed them records of those awful experiments, which would convince nobody; he gave them some little black eggs shaped like cigars and said, "Those are the eggs of

<sup>1</sup> *bacillus*: disease germ. <sup>2</sup> Theobald Smith: an American physician who discovered how Texas fever is spread among cattle by ticks. <sup>3</sup> Ronald Ross: a medical officer of the English army in India, who studied the mosquito as a carrier of malaria germs. <sup>4</sup> Grassi: Battista Grassi, an Italian scientist who also studied the transmission of malaria germs. There was considerable controversy between these two men as to which was entitled to the discovery. Accounts of the works of the three men here mentioned are given in *Microbe Hunters*.

the criminal!" And Walter Reed took those eggs, and gave them to Lazear, who had been in Italy and knew a thing or two about mosquitoes, and Lazear put the eggs into a warm place to hatch into wigglers, which presently wiggled themselves into extremely pretty mosquitoes, with silver markings on their backs — markings that looked like a lyre. Now Walter Reed had failed, but you have to give him credit for being a sharp-eyed man with plenty of common sense — and then too, as you will see, he was extraordinarily lucky. While he was failing to find bacilli, even in the dreadful cases, with bloodshot eyes and chests yellow as gold, with hiccups and with those prophetic retchings — while he was failing, Walter Reed noticed that the nurses who handled those cases, were soiled by those cases, never got yellow fever! They were nonimmunes too, those nurses, but they didn't get yellow fever.

"If this disease were caused by a bacillus, like cholera, or plague, some of those nurses certainly should get it," argued Walter Reed to his commission.

Then all kinds of strange tricks of yellow fever struck Walter Reed. He watched cases of the disease pop up most weirdly in Quemados. A man in a house in 102 Real Street came down with it; then it jumped around the corner to 20 General Lee Street, and from there it hopped across the road — and not one of these families had anything to do with each other, hadn't seen each other, even!

"That smells like something carrying the disease through the air to those houses," said Reed. There were various other exceedingly strange things about yellow fever — they had been discovered by an American, Carter. A man came down with yellow fever in a house. For two or three weeks nothing more happened — the man might die, he might have got better and gone away, but at the end of that two weeks, bang! a bunch of other cases broke out in that house. "That two weeks makes it look as if the virus were taking time to grow in some insect," said Reed to his commission, who thought it was silly; but they were soldiers.

"So we will try Finlay's notion about mosquitoes," said Walter Reed, for all of the just-mentioned reasons, but particularly because there was nothing else for the commission to do.

That was easy to say, but how to go on with it? Everybody knew perfectly well that you cannot give yellow fever to any animal — not even to a monkey or an ape. To make any kind of experiment to prove mosquitoes carry yellow fever you *must* have experimental

animals, and that meant nothing more nor less than human animals. But give human beings yellow fever! In some epidemics — there were records of them! — eighty-five men out of a hundred died of it, in some fifty out of every hundred — almost never less than twenty out of every hundred. It would be murder! But that is where the strong moral nature of Walter Reed came to help him. Here was a blameless man, a Christian man, and a man — though he was mild — who was mad to help his fellow men. And if you could *prove* that yellow fever was *only* carried by mosquitoes!

So, on one hot night after a day among dying men at Pinar del Río, he faced his commission. "If the members of the commission take the risk first — if they let themselves be bitten by mosquitoes that have fed on yellow-fever cases, that will set an example to American soldiers, and then —" Reed looked at Lazear, and then at James Carroll.

"I am ready to take a bite," said Jesse Lazear, who had a wife and two small children.

"You can count on me, sir," said James Carroll, whose total assets were his searcher's brain, and his miserable pay as an assistant surgeon in the army. (His liabilities were a wife and five children.)

Then Walter Reed (he had been called home to Washington to make a report on work done in the Spanish War) gave elaborate instructions to Carroll and Lazear and Agramonte. They were secret instructions, and savage instructions when you consider the mild man he was. It was an immoral business — it was a breach of discipline in its way, for Walter Reed then had no permission from the high military authorities to start it. So Reed left for Washington, and Lazear and Carroll set off on the wildest, most daring journey any two microbe hunters had ever taken. Lazear? You could not see the doom in his eyes — the gleam of the searcher outshone it. Carroll? That was a soldier who cared neither for death nor court-martial — Carroll was a microbe hunter of the great line.

Lazear went down between the rows of beds on which lay men, doomed men with faces yellow as the leaves of autumn, delirious men with bloodshot eyes. He bit those men with his silver-striped she-mosquitoes; carefully he carried these blood-filled beasts back to their glass homes, in which were little saucers of water and little lumps of sugar. Here the she-mosquitoes digested their meal of yellow-fever blood, and buzzed a little, and waited for the test.

"We should remember malaria," Reed had told Lazear and Carroll. "In that disease it takes two or three weeks for the mosquito to become dangerous — maybe it's the same here."

But look at the bold face of Jesse Lazear, and tell me if that was a patient man! Not he. Somehow he collected seven volunteers, who so far as I can find have remained nameless, since the test was done in dark secrecy. To these seven men — whom for all I know he may have shanghaied — but first of all to himself Lazear applied those mosquitoes who a few days before had fed on men who now were dead.

But alas, they all stayed as fit as fiddles, and that discouraged Lazear.

But there was James Carroll. For years he had been the right-hand man of Walter Reed. He had come into the army as a buck private and had been a corporal and a sergeant for years — obeying orders was burned into his very bones — and Major Reed had said, "Try mosquitoes!" What is more, what Major Reed thought was right, James Carroll thought was right, too, and Major Reed thought there was something in the notion of that Old Theorizing Fool. But in the army, thoughts are secondary — Major Reed had left them saying, "Try mosquitoes!"

So James Carroll reminded the discouraged Lazear, "I am ready!" He told Lazear to bring out the most dangerous mosquito in his collection — not one that had bitten only a single case, but he must use a mosquito that had bitten many cases — and they must be bad cases — of yellow fever. That mosquito must be as dangerous as possible! On the twenty-seventh of August, Jesse Lazear picked out what he thought to be his champion mosquito, and this creature, which had fed on four cases of yellow fever, two of them severe ones, settled down on the arm of James Carroll.

That soldier watched her while she felt around with her stinger. What did he think as he watched her swell into a bright balloon with his blood? Nobody knows. But he could think, what everybody knows, "I am forty-six years old, and in yellow fever the older the fewer — get better." He was forty-six years old. He had a wife and five children, but that evening James Carroll wrote to Walter Reed:

"If there is anything in the mosquito theory, I should get a good dose of yellow fever!" He did.

Two days later he felt tired and didn't want to visit patients in the yellow-fever ward. Two days after that he was really sick. "I

must have malaria!" he cried, and went to the laboratory under his own power, to squint at his own blood under the microscope. But no malaria. That night his eyes were bloodshot, his face a dusky red. The next morning Lazear packed Carroll off to the yellow-fever wards; and there he lay, near to death for days and days. There was one minute when he thought his heart had stopped . . . and that, as you will see, was a bad minute for Assistant Surgeon Carroll.

He always said those were the proudest days of his life. "I was the first case to come down with yellow fever after the experimental bite of a mosquito!" said Carroll.

Then there was that American private soldier they called "X.Y." — these outlaw searchers called him "X.Y.," though he was really William Dean, of Grand Rapids, Michigan. While James Carroll was having his first headaches, they bit this X.Y. with four mosquitoes — the one that nearly killed Carroll, and then three other silver-striped beauties besides, who had fed on six men that were fairly sick, and four men that were very sick with yellow fever and two men that died.

Now everything was fine with the experiments of Quemados. Eight men had been bitten, it is true, and were fit as fiddles — but the last two, James Carroll and X.Y., they were real experimental guinea pigs, those two; they had both got yellow fever — and James Carroll's heart had nearly stopped, but now they were both getting better, and Carroll was on the heights, writing to Walter Reed, waiting proudly for his chief to come back — to show him the records. Only Jesse Lazear was a little cynical about these two cases, because Lazear was a fine experimenter, a tight one, a man who had to have every condition just so, like a real searcher — and, thought Lazear, "It is too bad, seeing the nerve of Carroll and X.Y. — but both of them exposed themselves in dangerous zones once or twice, before they came down. It wasn't an absolutely perfect experiment — it isn't sure that *my* mosquitoes gave them yellow fever!" So Lazear was skeptical; but orders were orders, and every afternoon he went to those rows of beds at Las Animas, in the room with the faint strange smell, and here he turned his test tubes upside down on the arms of boys with bloodshot eyes, and let his she-mosquitoes suck their fill. But September 13 was a bad day, it was an unlucky day, for Jesse Lazear; for while he was at this silly job of feeding his mosquitoes, a stray mosquito settled down on the back of his hand. "Oh! that's nothing!" he thought. "That wouldn't be the right kind of mosquito



anyway!" he muttered, and he let the mosquito drink her fill — though, mind you, she was a stray beast that lived in this ward where men were dying!

That was September 13.

"On the evening of September 18 Dr. Lazear complained of feeling out of sorts, and had a chill at 8 P.M.," says a hospital record at Las Animas.

"September 19: Twelve o'clock noon," goes on that laconic record, "temperature 102.4 degrees, pulse 112. Eyes injected, face suffused." (That means bloodshot and red) "6 P.M. temperature 103.8 degrees, pulse 106. Jaundice appeared on the third day. The subsequent history of this case was one of progressive and fatal yellow fever" (and the record softens a little), "the death of our lamented colleague having occurred on the evening of September 25, 1900."

Then Reed came back to Cuba, and Carroll met him with enthusiasm, and Walter Reed was sad for Lazear, but very happy about those two successful cases of Carroll and X.Y. — and then, and then (brushing aside tears for Lazear) even in that there was the Hand of God, there was something for Science. "As Dr. Lazear was bitten by a mosquito while present in the wards of a yellow-fever hospital," wrote Walter Reed, "one must, at least, admit the possibility of this insect's contamination by a previous bite of a yellow-fever patient. This case of accidental infection therefore *cannot fail to be of interest.*"

"Now it is my turn to take the bite!" said Walter Reed, but he was fifty years old, and they persuaded him not to. "But we *must* prove it!" he insisted, so gently, that, hearing his musical voice and looking at his chin that did not stick out like the chin of a he-man, you might think Walter Reed was wavering (after all, here was one man dead out of three).

"But we must prove it," said that soft voice, and Reed went to General Leonard Wood, and told him the exciting events that had happened. Who could be less of a mollycoddle than this Wood? And he gave Walter Reed permission to go as far as he liked. He gave him money to build a camp of seven tents and two little houses — to say nothing of a flagpole — but what was best of all, Wood gave him money to buy men, who would get handsomely paid for taking a sure one chance out of five of never having a chance to spend that money! So Walter Reed said, "Thank you, General," and one mile from Quemados they pitched seven tents and raised a flagpole, and

flew an American flag and called that place Camp Lazear (three cheers for Lazear!), and you will see what glorious things occurred there.

Now, nothing is more sure than this: that every man of the great line of microbe hunters is different from every other man of them, but every man Jack of them has one thing in common: they are original. They were all original, excepting Walter Reed — who you cannot say would be shot for his originality, seeing that this business of mosquitoes and various bugs and ticks carrying diseases was very much in the air in those last ten years of the nineteenth century. It was natural for a man to think of that! But he was by all odds the most moral of the great line of microbe hunters — aside from being a very thorough clean-cut experimenter — and now that Walter Reed's moral nature told him, "You must kill men to save them!" he set out to plan a series of airtight tests — never was there a good man who thought of more hellish and dastardly tests!

And he was exact. Every man about to be bit by a mosquito must stay locked up for days and days and weeks, in that sun-baked Camp Lazear — to keep him away from all danger of accidental contact with yellow fever. There would be no catch in these experiments! And then Walter Reed let it be known, to the American soldiers in Cuba, that there was another war on, a war for the saving of men — were there men who would volunteer? Before the ink was dry on the announcements Private Kissenger of Ohio stepped into his office, and with him came John J. Moran, who wasn't even a soldier — he was a civilian clerk in the office of General Fitzhugh Lee. "You can try it on us, sir!" they told him.

Walter Reed was a thoroughly conscientious man. "But, men, do you realize the danger?" And he told them of the headaches and the hiccups and the black vomit — and he told them of fearful epidemics in which not a man had lived to carry news or tell the horrors.

"We know," said Private Kissenger and John J. Moran of Ohio; "we volunteer solely for the cause of humanity and in the interest of science."

Then Walter Reed told them of the generosity of General Wood. A handsome sum of money they would get — two hundred, maybe three hundred dollars, if the silver-striped she-mosquitoes did things to them that would give them one chance out of five not to spend that money.

"The one condition on which we volunteer, sir," said Private Kissenger and civilian clerk John J. Moran of Ohio, "is that we get no compensation for it."

To the tip of his cap went the hand of Walter Reed (who was a major), "Gentlemen, I salute you!" And that day Kissenger and John J. Moran went into the preparatory quarantine, that would make them first-class, unquestionable guinea pigs, above suspicion and beyond reproach. On the fifth of December Kissenger furnished nice full meals for five mosquitoes — two of them had bitten fatal cases fifteen days and nineteen days before. Presto! Five days later he had the devil of a backache, two days more and he was turning yellow — it was a perfect case, and in his quarters Walter Reed thanked God, for Kissenger got better! Then great days came to Reed and Carroll and Agramonte — for, if they weren't exactly over-run with young Americans who were ready to throw away their lives in the interest of science and for humanity, still there were ignorant people, just come to Cuba from Spain, who could very well use two hundred dollars. There were five of these mercenary fellows — whom I shall simply have to call "Spanish immigrants," or I could call them Man 1, 2, 3, and 4 — just as microbe hunters often mark animals "Rabbit 1, 2, 3, and 4 —" anyway, they were bitten, carefully, by mosquitoes who, when you take averages, were much more dangerous than machine-gun bullets. They earned their two hundred dollars — for four out of five of them had nice typical (doctors would look scientific and call them beautiful) cases of yellow fever! It was a triumph! It was sure! Not one of these men had been anywhere near yellow fever — like so many mice they had been kept in their screened tents at Quemados. If they hadn't been ignorant immigrants — hardly more intelligent than animals, you might say — they might have been bored, because nothing had happened to them excepting — the stabs of silver-striped she-mosquitoes.

"Rejoice with me, sweetheart," Walter Reed wrote to his wife, "as, aside from the antitoxin of diphtheria and Koch's discovery of the tubercle bacillus, it will be regarded as the most important piece of work, scientifically, during the nineteenth century."

Walter Reed was so thorough that you can call him original, as original as any of the microbe hunters of the great line — for he was certainly original in his thoroughness. He might have called it a day — you would swear he was tempted to call it a day: eight men had got yellow fever from mosquito bites, and only one — what amazing luck! — had died.

"But can yellow fever be carried in any other way?" asked Reed.

Everybody believed that clothing and bedding and possessions of yellow-fever victims were deadly — millions of dollars' worth of

clothing and bedding had been destroyed; the Surgeon General believed it; every eminent physician in America, North, South and Central (excepting that old fool Finlay) believed it. "But can it?" asked Reed, and while he was being so joyfully successful with Kissenger and Spaniards 1, 2, 3, and 4, carpenters came, and built two ugly little houses in Camp Lazear. House No. 1 was the nastier of these two little houses. It was fourteen feet by twenty, it had two doors cleverly arranged one back of the other so no mosquitoes could get into it, it had two windows looking south — they were on the same side as the door, so no draft could blow through that little house. Then it was furnished with a nice stove, to keep the temperature well above ninety, and there were tubs of water in the house — to keep the air as choky as the hold of a ship in the tropics. So you see it was an uninhabitable little house — under the best of conditions — but now, on the thirtieth of November in 1900, sweating soldiers carried several tightly nailed suspicious-looking boxes, that came from the yellow-fever wards of Las Animas — to make the house altogether cursed.

That night, of the thirtieth of November, Walter Reed and James Carroll were the witnesses of a miracle of bravery, for into this House No. 1 walked a young American doctor named Cooke, and two American soldiers, whose names — where are their monuments? — were Folk and Jernegan.

Those three men opened the tightly nailed, suspicious-looking boxes. They opened those boxes inside that house, in air already too sticky for proper breathing.

Phew! There were cursings, there were holdings of noses.

But they went on opening those boxes, and out of them Cooke and Folk and Jernegan took pillows, soiled with the black vomit of men dead of yellow fever; out of them they took sheets and blankets, dirty with the discharges of dying men past helping themselves. They beat those pillows and shook those sheets and blankets — "you must see the yellow-fever poison is well spread around that room!" Walter Reed had told them. Then Cooke and Folk and Jernegan made up their little army cots with those pillows and blankets and sheets. They undressed. They lay down on those filthy beds. They tried to sleep — in that room fouler than the dankest of medieval dungeons. And Walter Reed and James Carroll guarded that little house, so tenderly, to see no mosquito got into it, and Folk and Cooke and Jernegan had the very best of food, you may be sure.

Night after night those three lay in that house, wondering perhaps

about the welfare of the souls of their predecessors in those sheets and blankets. They lay there, wondering whether anything else besides mosquitoes (though mosquitoes hadn't even been proved to carry it then!) carried yellow fever. Then Walter Reed, who was a moral man and a thorough man, and James Carroll, who was a grim man, came to make their test a little more thorough. More boxes came to them from Las Animas — and when Cooke and Jernegan and Folk unpacked them, they had to rush out of their little house, it was so dreadful.

But they went back in, and they went to sleep.

For twenty nights — where are their monuments? — these three men stayed there, and then they were quarantined in a nice airy tent, to wait for their attack of yellow fever. But they gained weight. They felt fit as fiddles. They made vast jokes about their dirty house and their perilous sheets and blankets. They were happy as so many schoolboys when they heard Kissenger and those Spaniards (1, 2, 3, and 4) had really got the yellow jack after the mosquito bites. What a marvelous proof, you will say, but what a dastardly experiment — but for the insanely scientific Walter Reed that most dastardly experiment was not marvelous enough! Three more American boys went in there, and for twenty nights slept in new unspeakable sheets and blankets — with this little refinement of the experiment: they slept in the very pajamas in which yellow-fever victims had died. And then for twenty more nights three other American lads went into House No. 1, and slept that way — with this additional little refinement of the experiment: they slept on pillows covered with towels soaked with the blood of men whom the yellow jack had killed.

But they all stayed fit as fiddles! Not a soul of these nine men had so much as a touch of yellow fever! How wonderful is science, thought Walter Reed. "So," he wrote, "the bubble of the belief that clothing can transmit yellow fever was pricked by the first touch of human experimentation." Walter Reed was right. It is true, science is wonderful. But science is cruel, microbe hunting can be heartless, and that relentless devil that was the experimenter in Walter Reed kept asking, "But is your experiment really sound?" None of those men who slept in House No. 1 got yellow fever, that is true — but how do you know they were *susceptible* to yellow fever? Maybe they were naturally immune! Then Reed and Carroll, who had already asked as much of Folk and Jernegan as any captain has ever asked of any soldier — so it was that Reed and

Carroll now shot virulent yellow-fever blood under the skin of Jerne-gan, so it was they bit Folk with mosquitoes who had fed on fatal cases of yellow fever. They both came down with wracking pains and flushed faces and bloodshot eyes. They both came through their Valley of the Shadow. "Thank God," murmured Reed — but especially Walter Reed thanked God he had proved those two boys were not immune during those twenty hot stinking nights in House No. 1.

For these deeds Warren Gladson Jerne-gan and Levi E. Folk were generously rewarded with a purse of three hundred dollars — which in those days was a lot of money.

While these tests were going on John J. Moran, that civilian clerk from Ohio, whom Walter Reed had paid the honor of a salute, was a very disappointed man. He had absolutely refused to be paid; he had volunteered in "the interest of science and for the cause of humanity"; he had been bitten by those silver-striped *Stegomyia* mosquitoes (the bug experts just then thought this was the proper name for that mosquito) — he had been stabbed several times by several choice poisonous ones, but he hadn't come down with yellow fever, alas; he stayed fit as a fiddle. What to do with John J. Moran?

"I have it!" said Walter Reed. "This to do with John J. Moran!"

So there was built, close by that detestable little House No. 1, another little house, called House No. 2. That was a comfortable house! It had windows on the side opposite to its door, so that a fine trade wind played through it. It was cool. It had a nice clean cot in it, with steam-disinfected bedding. It would have been an excellent house for a consumptive to get better in. It was a thoroughly sanitary little house. Halfway across the inside of it was a screen, from top to bottom, a fine-meshed screen that the tiniest mosquito found it impossible to fly through. At twelve o'clock noon on the twenty-first of December in 1900, this John J. Moran (who was a hog for these tests) "clad only in a nightshirt and fresh from a bath," walked into this healthy little house. Five minutes before Reed and Carroll had opened a glass jar in that room, and out of that jar flew fifteen she-mosquitoes, thirsty for blood, whining for a meal of blood, and each and every one of those fifteen mosquitoes had fed, on various days before — on the blood of yellow-faced boys in the hospital of Las Animas.

Clad only in a nightshirt and fresh from a bath, Moran — who knows of him now? — walked into the healthy little room and lay

down on his clean cot. In a minute that frightful buzzing started round his head, in two minutes he was bitten, in the thirty minutes he lay there he was stabbed seven times — without even the satisfaction of smashing those mosquitoes. You remember Mr. Sola, whom Grassi tortured — he probably had his worried moments — but all Mr. Sola had to look forward to was a little attack of malaria and a good dose of curative quinine to get him out of it. But Moran? But John J. Moran was a hog for such tests! He was back there at four-thirty the same afternoon, to be bitten again, and once more the next day — to satisfy the rest of the hungry she-mosquitoes who hadn't found him the first day. In the other room of this house, with only a fine-meshed but perfect wire screen between them and Moran — and the mosquitoes — lay two other boys, and those two boys slept in that house safely for eighteen nights.

But Moran?

On Christmas morning of 1900 there was a fine present waiting for him — in his head, how that thumped — in his eyes, how red they were and how the light hurt them — in his bones, how tired they were! A nasty knock those mosquitoes had hit him and he came within a hair of dying but (thank God! murmured Walter Reed) he was saved, this Moran, to live the rest of his life in an obscurity he didn't deserve. So Moran had his wish — in the interest of science, and for humanity! So he, with Folk and Jernegan and Cooke, and all those others, proved that the dirty pesthole of a house (with no mosquitoes) was safe; and that the clean house (but with mosquitoes) was dangerous, so dangerous! So at last Walter Reed had every answer to his diabolical questions, and he wrote, in that old-fashioned prose of his, "The essential factor in the infection of a building with yellow fever is the presence therein of mosquitoes that have bitten cases of yellow fever."

It was so simple. It was true. That was all. That was that. And Walter Reed wrote to his wife:

"The prayer that has been mine for twenty years, that I might be permitted in some way or at some time to do something to alleviate human suffering has been granted! A thousand Happy New Years. . . . Hark, there go the twenty-four buglers in concert, all sounding taps for the old year! "

They were sounding taps, were those buglers, for the searcher that was Jesse Lazear, and for the scourge of yellow fever that could now be wiped from the earth.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. There are three outstanding features of interest in this essay: the human element, the scientific, and the lively style of the author. Watch for particularly good examples.
2. Of all the persons involved in the experiments, which ones did you find most interesting? Why?
3. What other great scientific discoveries that are of universal benefit to mankind can you name?

*For Your Vocabulary*

4. De Kruif has a good vocabulary for use in talking of disease and its treatment, and some of his most expressive words are used of other subjects as well. *Alleviate* (page 342) means to lighten, and is kin to the word *levity* for lighthearted manner or behavior. Much treatment of illness is intended only to *alleviate* the patient's sufferings — as distinguished from *curative* (page 342) treatment, which fights the disease directly. *Virus*, the word for the poison of a disease, gives us the adjective *virulent* (page 341), which is used of bitter (or poisonous) attitudes and behavior as well as the infections of disease.

*For Ambitious Students*

5. Read other chapters from *Microbe Hunters* and tell the class about them. Which discoveries were the most dramatic? the most valuable to mankind?
6. Report to the class other great scientific discoveries which have affected modern life. (See page 1189 for Dr. Carver's work.)

## E. B. WHITE (1899~ )

Since the *New Yorker* was born in 1925 and has come rapidly to the front as one of our wittiest magazines of general comment, the name of E. B. White has stamped itself vividly on the public mind. (The E. B. serves to conceal the name of Elwyn Brooks.) He says that he became an "orderly" on the magazine, meaning that he did any job that needed to be done from reviews to tag lines, even cover designs on occasion. He built up "The Talk of the Town" column, which has gained a wider audience through reprinting in the *Reader's Digest*. This work on the *New Yorker* gave him the right outlet for his versatility and originality. He could not work by set patterns. He tells how the *Seattle Times* had previously parted com-



pany with him because of his "uninhibited journalese." Since his first book of verse in 1929, *The Lady Is Cold*, he has published five volumes of prose or verse, one of the best known being *Ho Hum* and the latest *Fox of Peapack*.

In 1932 he married another member of the *New Yorker* staff and now lives in a country home, where he continues his writing for various magazines. He finds country life a great retreat. At the time of the Munich Pact he wrote in his column in *Harper's*: "I stayed in the barn steadily laying shingles all during the days when Mr. Chamberlain, M. Daladier, the Duce, and the Fuehrer were arranging their horse trade. . . . I'm done now, the barn is tight, and the peace is preserved. It is the ugliest peace the earth has ever received for a Christmas present." And so it proved.

The following lively little essay is a good example of White's witty literary comment. He is a master of the seriocomic vein. Under this straight-faced nonsense can you discover what he is really saying about poetry?

#### HOW TO TELL A MAJOR POET FROM A MINOR POET

AMONG the thousands of letters which I received two years ago from people thanking me for my article "How to Drive the New Ford" were several containing the request that I "tell them how to distinguish a major poet from a minor poet." It is for these people that I have prepared the following article, knowing that only through one's ability to distinguish a major poet from a minor poet may one hope to improve one's appreciation of, or contempt for, poetry itself.

Take the first ten poets that come into your head — the list might run something like this: Robert Frost, Arthur Guiterman, Edgar Lee Masters, Dorothy Parker, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Stephen Vincent Benét, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Lorraine Fay, Berton Braley, Edna St. Vincent Millay. Can you tell, quickly and easily, which are major and which minor? Or suppose you were a hostess and a poet were to arrive unexpectedly at your party — could you introduce him properly: "This is Mr. Lutbeck, the major poet," or "This is Mr. Schenk, the minor poet"? More likely you would have to say merely, "This is Mr. Masefield, the poet" — an embarrassing situation for both poet and hostess alike.

All poetry falls into two classes: serious verse and light verse. Serious verse is verse written by a major poet; light verse is verse written by a minor poet. To distinguish the one from the other, one must have a sensitive ear and a lively imagination. Broadly speaking, a

major poet may be told from a minor poet in two ways: (1) by the character of the verse, (2) by the character of the poet. (Note: it is not always advisable to go into the character of the poet.)

As to the verse itself, let me state a few elementary rules. Any poem starting with "And when" is a serious poem written by a major poet. To illustrate — here are the first two lines of a serious poem easily distinguished by the "And when":

And when, in earth's forgotten moment, I  
Unbound the cord to which the soul was bound . . .

Any poem, on the other hand, ending with "And how" comes under the head of light verse, written by a minor poet. Following are the *last* two lines of a "light" poem, instantly identifiable by the terminal phrase:

Placing his lips against her brow  
He kissed her eyelids shut. And how.

All poems of the latter type are what I call "light by degrees" — that is, they bear evidences of having once been serious, but the last line has been altered. The above couplet, for example, was unquestionably part of a serious poem which the poet wrote in 1916 while at Dartmouth, and originally ended:

Placing his lips against her brow  
He kissed her eyelids shut enow.

It took fourteen years of knocking around the world before he saw how the last line could be revised to make the poem suitable for publication.

While the subject matter of a poem does not always enable the reader to classify it, he can often pick up a strong clue. Suppose, for instance, you were to run across a poem beginning:

When I went down to the corner grocer  
He asked would I like a bottle of Welch's grape juice  
And I said, "No, sir."

You will know that it is a minor poem because it deals with a trade-marked product. If the poem continues in this vein:

"Then how would you like a package of Jello,  
A can of Del Monte peaches, some Grape Nuts,  
And a box of Rinso —  
Or don't you thin' so?"

you may be reasonably sure not only that the verse is "light" verse but that the poet has established some good contacts and is getting along nicely.

And now we come to the use of the word "rue" as a noun. All poems containing the word "rue" as a noun are serious. This word, rhyming as it does with "you," "true," "parvenu," "emu," "cock-a-doodle-doo," and thousands of other words, and occupying as it does a distinguished place among nouns whose meaning is just a shade unclear to most people — this word, I say, is the sort without which a major poet could not struggle along. It is the hallmark of serious verse. No minor poet dares use it, because his very minority carries with it the obligation to be a little more explicit. There are times when he would like to use "rue," as, for instance, when he is composing a poem in the A. E. Housman manner:

When drums were heard in Pelham,  
The soldier's eyes were blue,  
But I came back through Scarsdale,  
And oh the . . .

Here the poet would like to get in the word "rue" because it has the right sound, but he doesn't dare.

So much for the character of the verse. Here are a few general rules about the poets themselves. All poets who, when reading from their own works, experience a choked feeling, are major. For that matter, all poets who read from their own works are major, whether they choke or not. All women poets, dead or alive, who smoke cigars are major. All poets who have sold a sonnet for one hundred and twenty-five dollars to a magazine with a paid circulation of four hundred thousand are major. A sonnet is composed of fourteen lines; thus the payment in this case is eight dollars and ninety-three cents a line, which constitutes a poet's majority. (It also indicates that the editor has probably been swept off his feet.)

All poets whose work appears in "The Conning Tower" of the *World* are minor, because the *World* is printed on uncoated stock — which is offensive to major poets. All poets named Edna St. Vincent Millay are major.

All poets who submit their manuscripts through an agent are major. These manuscripts are instantly recognized as serious verse. They come enclosed in a manila folder accompanied by a letter from the agent: "Dear Mr. ———: Here is a new group of Miss McGroin's poems, called 'Seven Poems.' We think they are the most important

she has done yet, and hope you will like them as much as we do." Such letters make it a comparatively simple matter for an editor to distinguish between serious and light verse, because of the word "important."

Incidentally, letters from poets who submit their work directly to a publication without the help of an agent are less indicative but are longer. Usually they are intimate, breezy affairs, that begin by referring to some previously rejected poem that the editor has forgotten about. They begin: "Dear Mr. ———: Thanks so much for your friendly note. I have read over 'Invulnerable' and I think I see your point, although in line eight the word "hernia" is, I insist, the only word to quite express the mood. At any rate, here are two new offerings. 'Thrush-Bound' and 'The Hill,' both of which are rather timely. I suppose you know that Vivien and I have rented the most amusing wee house near the outskirts of Sharon — it used to be a well house and the well still takes up most of the living room. We are as poor as church mice but Vivien says, etc., etc."

A poet who, in a roomful of people, is noticeably keeping at a little distance and "seeing into" things is a major poet. This poet commonly writes in unrhymed six-foot and seven-foot verse, beginning something like this:

When, once, finding myself alone in a gathering of people,  
I stood, a little apart, and through the endless confusion of voices . . .

This is a major poem and you needn't give it a second thought.

There are many more ways of telling a major poet from a minor poet, but I think I have covered the principal ones. The truth is, it is fairly easy to tell the two types apart; it is only when one sets about trying to decide whether what they write is any good or not that the thing really becomes complicated.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Make a list of the tests that White gives to tell a major from a minor poet. How many of them do you think are purely absurd? How many of them are absurd on the surface, but with underlying meaning? Explain such meanings. If you do not understand any of his points, try to clarify them in class discussion.

2. Check the poets mentioned with whose work you have some acquaintance. What proportion of the total names are thus known to you? Are any persons mentioned who are not poets at all? How many of the poets mentioned are represented in the poetry section of this book?

3. After you have studied the poetry section, it would be interesting to return to this essay to see whether you have acquired further understanding or appreciation of White's wit.

*For Ambitious Students*

4. Write an essay of your own on a similar subject, such as "How to Tell a Senior from a Junior" or a football captain from a scrub.

ANNE MORROW LINDBERGH (1907- )

Only a few wives of celebrated men have attained fame in their own right. Anne Lindbergh is one of the few. Charles Lindbergh has the scientific mind which can accomplish great things in aviation but cannot translate them so skillfully into words. Anne, gifted with the interpretive and poetic mind, has chronicled their flights together in a way that will perpetuate them in living literature. In addition to that, she has shown great strength of will in mastering the intricacies of radio, a field quite foreign to her natural bent, in order to become a valuable companion on these flights.

Anne met Charles when he visited her father, Dwight Morrow, then ambassador to Mexico. They were married in 1929, a year after her graduation from Smith College. The story of their married life is well known to our present generation. One admires the courage with which Anne Lindbergh has carried on since the great tragedy of the kidnapping of their first son. Never is there a trace of bitterness in her books. It was soon after this event that the Lindberghs made the flight recorded in *North to the Orient* (1931). *Listen! the Wind* resulted from their survey of the Atlantic air routes in 1933, but is limited to only part of that momentous trip—the return flight from Africa to South America, with its unusual difficulties in taking off.

In recent years Anne Lindbergh has received numerous honors as a result of her work: the cross of honor of the American Flag Association for her part in the survey of transatlantic air routes, a gold medal from the National Geographic Association (the first to be given a woman), and honorary degrees from Amherst College and the University of Rochester. The citation given her at the Amherst presentation was: "You have given new wings to words."

## "IF WE TAKE OFF AT NIGHT . . ."

*from* LISTEN! THE WIND

In a review of *Wind, Sand, and Stars* by the French aviator, Antoine de Saint Exupéry, Anne Lindbergh discusses the problem of recording one's feelings during a flight in a way that helps us to understand her own books better. A friend had asked her after reading *North to the Orient*, "Did you really think all those things just as you were flying around the Pagoda?" No, she decided, she had not actually thought them at the time. Then her sincere nature was faced with the fact that it might be sentimental and dishonest to show an act as having more thought than it actually carried at the moment. This was the result of her mental argument: "No, I finally concluded, it is not dishonest. If I did not have exactly those words and thoughts, I had at least a sensation. I had an emotion; and I gathered that seed. I plucked off the hour hastily in passing, without cracking it open. I took it home with me, not knowing when that pod would deliver its seed to me, but hoping that someday it would, if only I were patient. Sometimes one waits years for these strange inner harvests." This is the secret of her art.

The following chapter shows the "seed" in the "pod" plucked from one of the Lindberghs' most dramatic hours. Their homeward flight from Africa had been delayed first by an adverse wind, then by no wind at all. Plans had to be carefully laid to conserve every moment of daylight for the long passage. Their first attempt to start at daybreak had been frustrated by too heavy a load and an early-morning calm. Now with a lightened load they risk night flight for the sake of the evening breeze.

WE WERE ready to start. I could see where we were, now. How far out we had gone. That thin line of lights on our left was the town. That thin band of dark on our right showed the opposite shore. Ahead, where the line blotted out indistinctly, that must be the harbor entrance. And here was the moon, full and high and brilliant, not quite facing us, coming in at an angle on our right, striking in its sparkling path the opposite shore, the waves in the bay, the gleaming curve of the wing, the shining cockpit covers, our faces. One narrow strip of vision in a dim world, one peephole in the night — this was what we were counting on. We must take off by this alone. We were not riding down that bright path, but we must use it, as a person in a dark room at night builds up out of the blackness, the walls, the doors, the chairs and tables, all from one slit of light through the shutters. How much that moonlit strip must tell to the pilot — waves and wind, direction and speed, height and balance.

He must plunge ahead into the darkness, guided by that silver ribbon in his right hand. We had flown like that before, I remembered, never taking off the water by moonlight, but through bad weather by day. Sometimes we had to push through the edge of a storm, blind in front of us, with only a small strip of sun-flecked field shining on our right, ahead, under the skirts of the rain. Green — hold on to that piece of green, I would think; that will pull us through. It took such faith to fly, I thought then, when the rain beat black on the windshield — to fly only by a small piece of green in your right hand. It was like walking through a dark passage as a child, your eyes on the light shining in the room beyond. But this — this was worse still, tonight. This *was* the dark passage and we must go ahead with only a hand brushing the side of the wall.

The dark — the dark — all childish terror of the dark poured back over me. What was there in the dark out there? How could he see? How could he control the plane? We would hook a wing into the water. We would be thrown, caught, drowned — that plane off Portugal — If only it were not dark — just for a second — if only —

"All set?"

"Yes, all right."

The noise, the spray, the dark; we were wrapped in all three tonight, spun in a cocoon, layer on layer about us. One could see nothing — nothing. No, but he could feel, I had forgotten that. I could feel, too, that gigantic lift the plane made against the wall of water. The rush — the climb. Tense, I held my breath. This time we'll get off. Watch the wing tip — on fire! No — only the flow of spray past the red light. How can he see — anything — even the path of the moon? No, but above? The stars — the stars were clear above. Out of this welter below they were fixed. They were unchanged. He could steer by the stars, pivot on them — Arcturus, Aldebaran.<sup>1</sup>

There — we were out of the spray. She's up on the step,<sup>2</sup> spanking along, driving across the bay, swift and straight as a bullet. And there was the moon, the bright path of the moon, ahead of us, racing along at our side, keeping pace with us, lighting our road like some friendly power, some swift goddess, always ahead. For we would not outstrip that path, no more than one could as a child, racing the moon in a train. No matter how fast one rushed — through towns and

<sup>1</sup> **Arcturus, Aldebaran:** stars of the first magnitude, whose names, she said, "sang in my mind like a half-remembered line of a poem." <sup>2</sup> **up on the step:** the point at which the plane is out of the water, but only skimming the surface at about thirty miles an hour, not yet rising into the air as the speed increases.

fields, tunnels and bridges, charging ahead at full speed — at each little pond, each bend of river, each sliver of marsh, the moon was there first. We would not outrun the moon. A goddess — no, perhaps, a will-of-the-wisp — it would run before us, leading us on and on across the bay, out of the harbor, into the sea even, if we followed it. But surely —

The sound changed. The roar slackened. He pulled back the throttle. The plane balked, hesitated a second, sank back into the sea. Down from the silver path, out of the swift track, into the trough of the waves. The water washed up around us, heaving us this way and that. The plane floundered uncertainly. The engine whined. We couldn't make it, then.

But why, why? What was the matter? I sat, still clasping my radio bag tightly in the back seat. What was wrong? We had a good wind — more than any time before. I even had my sweater on. We got up on the step, too. The moon was with us. Why couldn't we get off? If only he would tell me, something, anything. But I mustn't ask. We were still in the middle of it. Never ask anything in the middle of it. Upsetting. He's got enough to think about. But if he would only look around, I could see; I could tell perhaps, by the side of his face.

He did not look around; he was looking straight ahead. He was turning the plane, slowly and heavily wallowing in the waves. The moon slid behind us; the lights reappeared. We were going back. We would try again.

The plane commenced its long trek back over the water. I relaxed and started breathing regularly. I began to feel sick from excitement. I didn't want to be sick. It was absurd, I argued. Look at the stars. Remember this evening, the Cape. The stars — calm, peace. Remember you thought human misery small; human life unimportant. Arcturus, Aldebaran, Alpheratz — keep me from my fear. Arcturus, Aldebaran, Alpheratz — those were only words. Concentrate on the stars. Try to name them. That big circle there — the navigating stars — Capella, Castor, Pollux. Was that the Southern Cross? What did it point to? Think now, what did it point to — couldn't remember. The plane bobbed up and down. I felt sick.

He was turning now. He was going to try again. Get out your watch. Time it. By moonlight? Yes — I could see. The moon must be higher. Or my eyes accustomed to the dark, now, seeing more, cat's eyes.

"All set?"



" Yes, all right."

This time just look at your watch. Don't think — count — one — two — three — four . . . forty-five — forty-six — forty-seven — forty-eight. Spank — spank — spank — spank.

No — no use. He was pulling back the throttle. We sank back into the water. What was the matter? Oh — what *was* the matter? He turned the plane again, slowly, heavily. Why didn't he tell me something? He cut the switch. The engine kicked out a few last protesting sputters. It was suddenly still and peaceful. The lights twinkled in the distance from the shore. The stars shone unmoved over our heads. The moonlight fell gently over our shoulders into the cockpit. We were two people alone, bobbing about in the chop in the middle of the bay at night.

There was a long silence, only the waves slapping on the pontoons, only the wind against our ears, only the creak of the plane rocking from side to side.

Finally, I spoke. " What are you going to do? " My voice sounded flat and ordinary out of the stillness.

" Don't know — thought we'd think about it." He was discouraged. " It almost gets off — almost. I don't understand it."

The fire had gone out of his words but he still hoped we could get off.

What should I say? How should I try to swing things? Should I say what I really felt, " Let's not take any more chances — go back to bed " ? No — that was just weakness — mustn't give in to it. Besides, it was silly, I knew he didn't take chances. Should I force myself to say, " Come, let's try again " ? No, I didn't know enough about it — better leave it to him. I said nothing.

The plane bobbed up and down; the waves slapped against the pontoons. I waited, sitting still, hanging on to my radio bag in the dark.

" Well," the voice from the front cockpit, " I think we'd better go back and get a good night's rest and think things over."

" Oh — " Relief — warm relief and tiredness flooded through me. But don't say anything. Don't give in to it, not yet.

The head in the front cockpit turned. " We'll try again on the way home."

" On the way home," I thought. That shows how little hope he has. I tried to key myself up to another take-off. It was no use. I could not get back to that level. We could not get off. The evening had gone flat. The terror and the beauty, both, had vanished. The stars were not pivots for our flight. The wind was not a voice calling

us to action. The plane was not a bullet, but only a clumsy water-bound boat. The moon was not a goddess, racing us, guiding us on. It was only the moon — and it was waning.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Point out passages where the author makes the mental experience especially vivid; where she shows poetic feeling, contrasting timidity and self-control; where she repeats details to work up to a climax of emotion.

#### *For Ambitious Students*

2. Have you gone through similar moments of intense anxiety where you were powerless to control the situation? If so, write a short essay in which you emphasize your mental state under these circumstances. Observe the way in which Anne Lindbergh uses the moon to tie together the beginning and the end, making a well-rounded whole. Try using some symbol in this way in your essay.

3. Special reports: other experiences of the Lindberghs as described in *North to the Orient* and *Listen! the Wind*; experiences of other aviators in their own words, such as Amelia Earhart's *The Fun of It* and *Last Flight* and Saint Exupéry's *Wind, Sand, and Stars*.

## *The Magazine in America*

THE MAGAZINE is one of the most amazing productions of our modern life. Magazines have been in existence only a little more than two centuries. Addison and Steele started the first one, called *The Tatler*, in England in 1709. Our present *Saturday Evening Post* claims direct descent from Benjamin Franklin's paper of 1728, but that was really a newspaper. Franklin and another printer raced each other to see who would issue the first real American magazine. Both magazines were published early in 1741 and both perished of malnutrition after a few months. A few other magazines, however, sprang up in colonial days. Their progeny of the twentieth century now number thousands. If one were to include along with the periodicals of general appeal all those intended only for professional, church, school, organization, and local groups, it would be almost an impossible task to take a complete magazine census.

Like the human population, the magazine population shifts. Many die and are forgotten; a few die but are remembered. Illustrations from *Godey's Lady's Book* hang on the walls of many a modern home; *Puck* and the *Youth's Companion* are still happy memories to many living people. Still fewer periodicals continue to survive over a long period of time until they become patriarchs like the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *North American Review*. The rising periodicals constantly press upon the elders. Today our magazine counters look like florists' shops full of gay colors, for each cover seems to try to outdo its neighbors in eye appeal. But he who picks his magazines by the cover alone may have pretty sorry reading. The better magazines are often sober in appearance, and some prefer merely to print their table of contents on the outside. Unfortunately, in many a corner drug-store, especially in small communities, it is hard to find copies of our highest type of magazine, while the tawdry and sensational ones are ever present.

It pays to know one's way around among magazines, for they serve not only as pickup reading for odd moments, or as relaxation after work, but also as the chief introduction and encouragement of promising young writers, as a great medium of exchange of ideas, and as formulators of public taste and opinion with tremendous power behind them. Feed your mind on cheap and shoddy magazines and you are likely to weaken your power of thinking; feed it on intelligent and distinctive ones and there is greater chance that you may become an intelligent and distinctive person.

The following clever little article taken from the *Saturday Review of Literature* opens up the question of magazine personalities. There are endless possibilities for following this up with investigations of your own. Most of us like to meet new people. How about meeting some new "magazine people"?

## MAGAZINES ARE HUMAN

by HENRY S. CANBY

MAGAZINES are like all those structures which man erects to shelter his sensitive body and his active wits. They are like houses, which so often acquire personalities of their own quite different from what their architects intended, and different, too, in a queer, half-human way, from the personalities of those who live and love in their cubby-holes.

Books are born with all their traits and often die with, and of, them. Magazines acquire personality slowly, shaping themselves in a queer, uncontrollable fashion to fit the minds of their readers — not, to be sure, the minds which readers would call their own, but some more essential psychologies made up of unconscious prejudices and unguessed wants mingled with conscious tastes and desires. Hence the finished magazine is a created being that may have no soul but certainly possesses a mind of its own and a personality. It steps out into society, seeking its place and responding to its environment, and a social historian could describe it as if it were animate.

The *New Yorker*, for example. The *New Yorker* is like one of those perky little maisonnettes set in the façade of a vast apartment house, and grinning up at pretentiousness and absurdity. It stands on its own threshold watching the doorman handing incredible women out of limousines, rolling under its tongue what may be happening in the penthouse, winking at the children sliding on the asphalt, and batting an eye at the supertenement across the street in whose windows New York is living its private life in public. It is bourgeois itself or it could not enjoy these delightful absurdities, and it has the bourgeois qualities of good sense and hearty laughter, but refined by a quick-moving intellect and ripened into that best of all provincialism which sees itself against a backdrop of the world. No aristocratic magazine can be published in America — and carry advertising. *Vogue* and *Vanity Fair* are proof. The mixture of snobbism and familiarity which distinguishes expensive advertising, and the shameless display of would-be aristocrats selling face cream and cigarettes, are impossible to combine with the aristocratic. The reading columns would hiss at the display and the display take the edge from the text. Even the urbanity of the *New Yorker* turns sour at some of its contacts, and the magazine, like a good bourgeois, tolerant and liberal, eases off into a rather amusing affectation of snobbism all its own, as it wanders through the gift and corset ads toward the back cover.

*Harper's* is an intellectualist turned journalist, or one of the new type of college professors, aggressive, up-to-date, well dressed, not believing in anything very deeply, but determined to keep one intellectual sensation ahead of the next fellow. The *Atlantic Monthly* has become the perfect image of a cultivated New England woman, wise, rather witty, serious *au fond*,<sup>1</sup> but so well accustomed to the polite world that life in the not too raw and simplicity and Englishmen from India or women longing to exhibit their emotions interest her

<sup>1</sup> *au fond*: fundamentally. (French.)

much more than clever feature writers who tell you what not to think about anything. She carries a tract or two with her about Wall Street or Fascism, and every now and then has an emotional outburst of her own, which is fun. The *Mercury* is still Mencken, but getting a little uneasy lest exposing the dumbbells should prove to have been bad psychology. It is a hard and bitter talker, stopping (just now) to listen to itself. *Scribner's* is a little out of breath. The *Yale Review* is college Gothic,<sup>1</sup> solid, expensive, with a few too many literary ornaments perfunctorily reproducing an earlier century. The *Nation* has a sour stomach, but is recovering. The *New Republic* is a dyspeptic with the extraordinary fits of energy and relapses into dryness characteristic of all dyspeptics. But then fat and healthy magazines, like those that go to the millions, have no individuality, although expensive editors are employed and valuable pages set aside to provide them with personalities (very cooeey often, or rough and red-blooded) every week or month. The *Forum* is two elderly gentlemen, very experienced and very knowledgeable, gripping each other's buttons while they debate in a corner. *Time* is a bright college boy, immensely and rapidly read, with a tongue in his cheek and his mouth open, while he pounds the news inside out in the attempt to make it exciting. *Fortune* is a gentleman of the last old school, sitting at an executive's desk (supplied by Danersk<sup>2</sup>), with charts of rising production curves and plans of factories de luxe on the walls, in an atmosphere of nostalgia that makes strong millionaires weep. The *Saturday Review* . . .

But if no man can see himself unmoved, surely a like emotion should be granted to magazines. Besides we grow libelous, and this figure that weekly steps into our office is, with all his (or her?) faults, beloved.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Are there any magazines here mentioned that you have never seen? How many of them are on sale at your corner drugstore? Try to have copies of all of them brought to class so that you can see whether you agree with the writer's characterization of them. Discuss your own opinions of them. Have any of them died or changed in any way since this article was written?

2. What are some of the "fat and healthy" magazines? Do you agree

<sup>1</sup> Gothic: a medieval style of architecture often used for college buildings

<sup>2</sup> Danersk: a manufacturer of elegant furniture.

that they have no personality? If you think they have personality, characterize some of them.

3. What kind of material do you most frequently read in magazines — stories, articles, special departments? Is your reading well balanced, or do you read too much of one kind of thing, or no magazines at all?

4. Discuss the value and dangers of magazine reading in general as to types of reading matter, time spent, and comparison with the reading of books.

5. Vocabulary: maisonette, façade, perfunctorily, nostalgia, libelous.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

6. Words often acquire very different meanings even when they are developed from stems of similar meaning. Consider the words *urbanity* (page 355), from the Latin word for city, and *bourgeois* (page 355), which developed from the French word *bourg* for town. *Urbanity* is a manner which is smooth, polite, and polished. To call a person *urbane* is to pay him a high compliment. But *bourgeois*, which is either a noun or an adjective, is nearly always used in a derogatory sense, the opposite of a compliment. Strictly it means one of the middle class, having property and above mere laborers, but still not a gentleman. It usually implies a lack of refinement and distinction. The polished gentleman uses it of those beneath him in culture and social rank. The intellectual uses it for the materialist. The worker uses it for the capitalist, on whom he blames his troubles. Do you feel the slight difference between town and city that has grown into this marked difference?

### *For Ambitious Students*

7. Extend the article by writing up your characterization of other well-known magazines of today. Remember to make them seem like people.

8. A co-operative study of major current magazines is valuable and interesting. Let each volunteer choose a name from a selected list of worthwhile magazines. His responsibility is to find out facts such as type of magazine, price, frequency of publication, permanent departments, use of illustrations, proportion given to advertising, etc. These facts may be put together on a wall chart or in a loose-leaf book for class reference. Each volunteer also shows the magazine to the class and gives a brief talk on its points of special interest.

9. As a conclusion to such study, let each student make out a list of magazines he would like to subscribe to if he had ten dollars a year for such a purpose; another list for twenty-five dollars or more. Make out a class list of those you think should be added to the high-school library if the present selection is meager.

## Book Reviews

THE book-review column of a good magazine or newspaper is like a map to guide you over unfamiliar ground. You cannot possibly read all the new books that come out. You don't wish to waste your time reading books that will not appeal to you in subject matter or that are poorly written. Sometimes you don't care to read a certain book, but you wish to know something about it because everyone is talking about it. Sometimes you are looking for guidance in selecting books for another person. Sometimes after you have read a book you wish to find out whether you and the reviewer agree or disagree on it. Sometimes pure curiosity about what new books are on the horizon leads you to the reviewer's column. These are all legitimate motives. There is only one illegitimate one: to try to give the impression that you have read a book when all you have read is a review.

Here you have three good reviews of recent years appearing in three outstanding magazines, all of which were mentioned in the preceding article. Of the three, the *Saturday Review of Literature* is the only one devoted exclusively to comment on literature. The two reviewers represented are widely known. *Time's* reviews are anonymous. Of the three books reviewed, the first is a novel (recently retold in an excellent moving picture); the second is a Pulitzer Prize biography; the third is — well, read what the reviewer thinks. All of them are written by men who are eminent in their particular fields.

### DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK

by WALTER D. EDMONDS

Reviewed by Clifton Fadiman in the *New Yorker*, August 1, 1936

WALTER D. EDMONDS, who turned the green and stagnant waters of the Erie Canal into the living stream of entertaining fiction, still, in his new novel, sticks close to home. Even more militantly York State-ish than were *Rome Haul* and *Erie Water* is *Drums along the Mohawk* (592 pages, \$2.50). He goes back now to Revolutionary times,

when the plodding German and Dutch Mohawk Valley colonists thought of themselves not as Americans, perhaps not even as York Staters, but merely as a group of farmers living in the same valley, with their economic liberty menaced by Tory landowners and Indian mercenaries.

Mr. Edmonds takes about fifty of these Mohawkers and their friends and enemies, and carries the whole lot of them through the backwoods guerrilla warfare of 1776-83. This warfare was no affair of large army movements. It was a matter of sniping, raids, sieges of stockades, forest ambushes, the destruction of hayricks and log cabins, the scalping of men, women, and children. Along the length of the river from Fort Johnson to Fort Stanwix, these tiny devastations ran their course for seven years. In this forgotten hinterland the Revolution proper may be said never to have occurred. The Mohawkers were defending their wheat, corn, and houses; or, Germans, most of them, they were engaged in a local racial struggle against Indians and Britishers. But with the coalition of Yankee commercial magnates and Virginia planters that created the ideas and slogans of the Revolution and directed its course, these small farmers had nothing in common. In fact — this is the burden of whatever idea structure the book boasts — the Mohawkers hated the Bostonians, distrusted the Continental Congress, and only dimly understood what General Washington was after. They carried on their own private war in their own way, courageously, stubbornly, but with no understanding of the part they were playing in history. "The plain farmer, thinking of his hay and wheat, had no real idea of what the war was about." As their leader, General Nicholas Herkimer, put it, "You could say it's got nothing to do with a war at all."

Mr. Edmonds rather likes this parochialism. It suits his fierce devotion to his own geographical bailiwick — a devotion which, without discomfiture, he can project backward a hundred and fifty years, preserving it in all its provincial purity. The result is that his book is only formally a historical novel. Really it contains no history, because its events and characters are insulated from the main stream of the Revolution. It contains, instead, chronicle and adventure — as much adventure as the Boy Scout hidden in all of us could desire. There are at least ten major plots and romances (and I am not the man to tell you about any of them), all carried forward with great skill, all full of movement, with the local and temporal color worked up with energy and affection.

Mr. Edmonds, however, quite naturally feels that his book has a



more serious purpose. He nurses a grudge against the Continental Congress because it did not understand conditions in the Mohawk Valley and, he feels, mismanaged things badly. But, lest you think it is a little late to bring all that up, Mr. Edmonds hastens to assure you that he is really writing, in a sly upstate manner, about *You and Me Today*: "To those who feel that here is a great to-do about a bygone life, I have one last word to say. It does not seem to me a bygone life at all. The parallel is too close to our own. Those people of the valley were confronted by a reckless Congress and ebullient finance, with their inevitable repercussions of poverty and practical starvation." You see the point, of course — with particular clarity, perhaps, if you happen to be a good Republican. More cautious souls will wonder whether economic and social conditions in an industrially developed country of one hundred and twenty million people have really much in common with the frontier economy of ten thousand farmers who lived and died a century and a half ago. However that may be, the Liberty League may care to use *Drums along the Mohawk* as a campaign document, and the rest of us may obtain a less sophisticated pleasure from the simple rush of its narrative, its Indians and stockades and raids and linsey-woolsey heroes and heroines.

## BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

by CARL VAN DOREN

Reviewed in *Time*, October 10, 1938

AMERICANS may think of Washington freezing at Valley Forge, of Patrick Henry demanding liberty or death, but they never catch Benjamin Franklin in such heroic poses. Instead, the old Philadelphian goes beaming and nodding through history, saying chuckling things to pretty girls, advising young men to save their money and get up early in the morning. Whether he is denouncing the king, flying his kites, or delivering himself of his flawless platitudes, he is self-confident, unself-conscious, comfortable, good-natured, insatiably curious.

But only Franklin himself, of all the people who have written about his life, seems to have realized just how droll a character he was. His latest biographer, Carl Van Doren, whose 845-page biography is published this week, makes it plain that Franklin was a great man, a

notable scientist, a superb diplomat, an enterprising printer. But when Franklin as a human being, with his quirks and oddities, emerges from these close-packed pages, it is usually in the well-chosen quotations from Franklin's *Autobiography*.

Van Doren's *Benjamin Franklin* is not so much a biography as an encyclopedia — meaty, informative, and valuable, but with few literary charms. It includes the whole story of Franklin's career (Author Van Doren lists twenty-seven subjects or episodes treated for the first time) and readers who stay with it come back with a rich historical haul. They get a good idea of what it was like to be a seventeen-year-old penniless apprentice in Philadelphia in 1723; a fresh account of the state of science when Franklin began his electrical experiments; an essay on the more worldly of Poor Richard's maxims, such as "There's more old drunkards than old doctors," or "Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterward." Genuinely exciting is the 200-page record of the growing antagonism between England and the colonies, as Franklin witnessed it in London, where as a colonial agent he fought the Stamp Act, worked desperately for a reconciliation, appeared before Parliament to be baited by stupid and arrogant Tories, and was finally harried out of the country, cursing the "extreme corruption . . . in this rotten old state."

The Franklin who was involved in great affairs gets full treatment from Author Van Doren. The other Franklin — lying on his back in the water and letting a kite tow him across a pond — is unfortunately written of almost as soberly; and Author Van Doren is so intent on making Franklin a great scientist that he misses the comedy of such scenes as Franklin spilling oil out of a boat to study the effect on waves, building his outlandish "armonica" of thirty-seven musical glasses which whirled like a spinning wheel, and playing his harp, guitar, and violin between interviews with ministers and sessions of scientific societies. Franklin had a good time; it is difficult to think of a public figure who enjoyed himself more. The world was full of wonders for him, from the way little girls speculated about their future marriages to the clever way the paving stones of Paris were fitted together; and at seventy, when he was in grave danger of being hanged for treason, he was still going strong, as inquisitive and observant as ever, noting the change of temperature when his ship entered the Gulf Stream on his way to France, and speculating on the ways of flying fish, currency, and French politics.

## MY AMERICA

by LOUIS ADAMIC

Reviewed by William Allen White in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, May 28, 1938

A CURIOUS but significant book is this. It might be well entitled *A Potpourri of America*. It is not cast as autobiography, according to the formal rules of the autobiographical art. It is something more than an unrelated collection of essays, sketches, magazine articles, diary entries, and incidental philosophy. Yet because the incidental philosophy permeates all the contents of the book, it has unity. And when the reader has reached page 662, he knows what Louis Adamic thinks of America. Moreover, the reader knows that Louis Adamic's opinion is worth considering. For in this book he reaches such a wide scope of American areas, both geographically (from coast to coast and from the lakes to the South) and socially (from Rupert Hughes, "a sort of Doctor Johnson from Hollywood," to the coal bootleggers of Pennsylvania), that his evidence may well be accepted as the views of an expert.

He proves further that he is an expert by rendering a balanced judgment. In his America he takes account of the unrest of labor. He has set down the real and cruel grievances of the underprivileged. He has a keen sense of the inertia of the middle class and of middle-class idealism and unconscious middle-class class consciousness. He knows the roadside Americans, the girl at the lunch counter, the filling-station boy who wipes your windshield and hopes next year to own a filling station down the road. And he knows the labor agitator and the labor dynamiter, and the boss's spy. You also meet the boss, who is harried, tempted, rather mean, sometimes gentle, occasionally, even generally, decent according to his lights and standards. Here in these pages one sees the mill town and the mining town; and the little country town with elm-shaded trees and wide lawns where a good two-fifths of our population live; the towns between five hundred and fifty thousand, the homes and fortresses of the middle class. And one sees also, here in these pages, the great magnificent cities, the wide harbors with gull-like ships and the rich black plowing land of the farms, and the desert with swirling dust. And when the reader comes to the last paragraph, which declares, "I want America to have a chance to think and debate about the methods of progress most

suiting to her, and gradually — not via any short cuts — to deal with her internal discords and incongruities which are dislocating her life, throwing it out of focus. I want America to remain America. I want America eventually to become a work of art ” — when one reads that paragraph of this book, over the long winding way of this book, the general impression the reader gets is that he has been looking at a picture of democracy by a laughing idealist. The artist who paints this picture gives the impression that he has a potent passion for democracy even though he knows she has a wart on her neck and a wen on her chin, eats too many calories, and bulges in the wrong places, has a mad strain in her ancestry and goofy children; but still the passion persists and glorifies the picture.

That is about what the book is — a beautiful book, as American as *Roughing It* brought up to date. It is as though Mr. Adamic had taken the song “ America the Beautiful ” and had played it on every kind of musical instrument from a horse fiddle to a celestial harp, and by some magic had harmonized it all into a vast choral symphony. Which is to say that *My America* is well worth reading, rereading, pondering, and engraving upon the heart of America. In short, it is a swell book!

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Which of these reviews is the most interesting to read in itself? Which book do you feel most impelled to read after seeing the review? Is there any that you would definitely not want to read? Why not? Does any review give you a different impression of the book from what you had obtained from reading or hearsay?

2. Observe that Mr. Fadiman does not tell the plot of the novel, yet gives you a pretty clear idea of what the book is about. Discuss the advantages or disadvantages of omitting the plot from a review. Which method do you prefer for reviews given before the class?

3. Do you find adverse criticism in these reviews? If so, where? Discuss the effects of adverse criticism either in a magazine or in a class review. What would happen if adverse criticism were suppressed? Formulate some general advice to reviewers as to the handling of adverse criticism.

#### For Your Vocabulary

4. *Ebullience* is a quality about as nearly the opposite of *inertia* as can be imagined, even though the former describes states of mind while the latter describes physical states as well. *Inertia* in its general sense means

inactivity or sluggishness, as when Mr. White speaks of the *inertia* of the middle class (page 362). But *ebullient* literally means boiling over, as with enthusiasm or excitement. Just what did Mr. Edmonds mean by describing finance as *ebullient* (page 360)?

### For Ambitious Students

5. Write reviews of one book of fiction and one of nonfiction that you have recently read. Do the two kinds present different problems to the reviewer? Which is the easier type for you to handle?

6. Write for some member of your family a review of a book he has been too busy to read. Have him read and criticize your review as to its general interest and helpfulness. What alterations would you make if you were giving it before a club where some had read the book?

7. Begin to form the habit (if you have not already done so) of reading one or more good book-review columns regularly. After a month or two decide whether you have gained greater interest in good reading as a result.

### FOR FURTHER READING OF ESSAYS

References given within the section are not repeated here.

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 Canby, H. S., *The Age of Confidence*  
 Crothers, S. M., *Among Friends; The Cheerful Giver; The Dame School of Experience; The Gentle Reader; By the Christmas Fire*  
 Durant, Will, *The Story of Civilization*  
 Edman, Irwin, *Philosopher's Holiday*  
 Grayson, David (Ray Stannard Baker), *Adventures in Contentment; Adventures in Friendship; The Friendly Road; Great Possessions*  
 Holliday, R. C., *Broome Street Straws; Turns about Town; The Walking-Stick Papers; Men, Books, and Cities*  
 Hoover, Ike, *Forty-Two Years in the White House*  
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 Muir, John, *Our National Parks; Steep Trails; Travels in Alaska; My First Summer in the Sierra*  
 Olcott, W. T., *The Book of the Stars for Young People*  
 Roberts, C. G. D., *Kindred of the Wild; Hunters of the Silences; Watchers of the Trail*  
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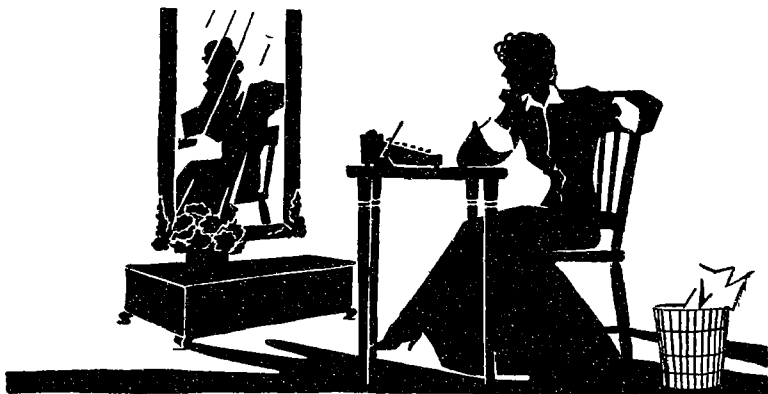
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 Brooks, C. S., *Journeys to Bagdad; There's Pippins and Cheese to Come; Chimney-Pot Papers; Hunts to Pilgrims; A Thread of English Road; Roundabout to Canterbury; Roads to the North*  
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 Chase, M. E., *This England*  
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 Fergusson, Harvey, *Rio Grande*  
 Flandrau, C. M., *Viva Mexico*  
 Franck, H. A., *Four Months Afoot in Spain; A Vagabond Journey around the World*  
 Gilfillan, Lauren, *I Went to Pit College*  
 Halliburton, Richard, *The Royal Road to Romance; The Glorious Adventure; The Magic Carpet*  
 Halsey, Margaret, *With Malice toward Some*  
 Hearn, Lafcadio, *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan; Kokoro; Out of the East; Fantastics and Other Fancies*  
 Henry, R. S., *Trains*  
 Irwin, Will, *Highlights of Manhattan*  
 Jackson, H. H., *Glimpses of California and the Missions*  
 Kent, Rockwell, *The Wilderness*  
 London, Jack, *The Cruise of the Snark*  
 Peary, R. E., *The North Pole*  
 Seitz, D. C., *Famous American Duels*  
 Smith, F. H., *Gondola Days; In Dickens's Land; A White Umbrella in Mexico*  
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## COLLECTIONS OF ESSAYS

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 Heydrick, B. A., *Types of the Essay*  
 Johnson, Burgess, *Essaying the Essay*  
 Knickerbocker, E. V., *Present-Day Essays*  
 Law, F. H., *Modern Essays and Stories; Modern Life and Thought; Science in Literature*  
 Lyman, R. L., *The Mind at Work*  
 McCullough, B. W., and Burgum, E. B., *A Book of Modern Essays*  
 Morley, Christopher, *Modern Essays for Schools*  
 Rees, B. J., *Modern American Prose Selections*  
 Tanner, W. M., *Essays and Essay Writing; Modern Familiar Essays*



## BIOGRAPHY

THE INCREASE in the number and quality of biographies produced in America during the twentieth century indicates that this type of literature has today reached a place of importance never attained before. From the time, two thousand years ago, when Plutarch wrote his famous *Lives* until recent years only an occasional volume of biography by sheer excellence pushed itself into public favor in competition with the more popular poetry, drama, or novel. But today biography is one of our most widely read forms of literature.

The older conception of biography. Present-day biography is different from the older biography, and in that difference lies the reason for its new popularity. Except for the few brilliant books that still loom up from past centuries, the older biographies were usually of two kinds, either purely informational records in which numerous details were presented in an uninspired style discouraging to the general reader, or flattering "official" biographies which tended to leave out the defects of great men and gloss over their weaknesses. The authors of this second type accepted wholeheartedly Longfellow's dictum:

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,

and assumed that such reminders could come only from heroic figures stripped of all human frailties.

The new conception of biography. But there has been a reaction to these methods — largely the result of the realistic and scientific spirit which has entered into all types of literature. A biographer of today knows that he must write with vigor and deftness if he



is to win readers, and that he must present an honest, all-round picture of a person if he would retain the respect of his readers. As to inspiration, the modern biographer realizes that if his "great man" is set on too high a pedestal the reader is likely to be discouraged or repelled, whereas a true portrayal of the struggles of a human being may lead the reader to try for some laurels of his own. The biographer must, of course, be a wise interpreter of the interwoven good and bad, strength and weakness, in a man's life. It is not surprising that an overzealous realist occasionally bends his efforts toward revealing all the flaws in some favorite of the hero-worshippers, such as Washington and Lincoln. Remember, however, that this usually represents the opposite swing of the pendulum away from the interpretation of equally overzealous admirers of an earlier day.

The desire to improve the readability of biography has led to the introduction of many elements of good fiction, such as vivid description, sprightly conversation, suspense, and climax. Some writers go to the extent of dipping into the mind of a person long since dead and telling exactly what he was thinking at a given moment as if he were a character in a novel. This method is condemned by the more objective biographer, but even he is likely to give us as much of the mental processes of his subject as letters and records will justify. In this modern age we long to know the motives and mental struggles behind a person's outward acts. Since the novel has come to deal more with the ordinary course of human lives than with elaborately constructed plots, it is evident that fiction and biography are coming more and more to resemble each other. Some novels are thinly disguised biographies, and some biographies are almost novels about actual people.

Taken on the whole, the new methods, when not carried to extremes, have greatly improved the biography as a type of literature and have resulted in a great stream of excellent writing in that field.

Since well-written biography belongs so largely to our own times, a chronological presentation of major writers as in the two preceding sections would be practically impossible. Previous to 1900, it may be truly said, American literature had produced only one great or even outstanding biography, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. It is one of the valued documents of American history, carrying with it the flavor of an age now passed away, and giving us a full-length portrait of one of our "founding fathers." For this reason the selection from it has been placed in the section of this book which reflects the life and spirit of our nation as they have unfolded during

the centuries (see page 879). The following selections have all been written within the present century, though several of the persons described lived during the nineteenth century.

**Biography and autobiography differentiated.** Autobiography is an author's account of his own life. If the biography written in the third person tends to blend into the novel of character, so the autobiography tends toward the book of travel, the diary, or the personal essay. Occasionally it is hard to know where to draw the line, but in general the word "autobiography" applies only when the span of life is fairly well covered, not when only a limited time of unusual experience is described.

It is obvious that a person will not appear the same through the window of another person's eyes as he will in the mirror of his own. The outsider can view the subject more impartially, can study the relations between his main character and other men more accurately, can judge the sum total of his service to humanity with truer perspective, can even know what the world thinks about him after his death. But on the other hand the autobiographer has an advantage. His firsthand information about his experiences makes for vividness and genuineness of impression. You identify yourself with him and live his life temporarily. You can step into his mind and read his motives without feeling "fictionalized." You share his depression in failure and his satisfaction in success. There is often greater charm in an autobiography, but less appraisal. For how can a man pass true judgment on himself? Is he modest? His achievements shrink. Is he vain? They swell in significance. He may honestly try to blend the various notes of his personality into a true harmony, but the astute reader must sense the real character from the overtones that he hears as he turns the pages. The autobiography often serves as a source book for the outside biographer; and where a man's life has been written from both points of view, a reader can enjoy comparing the two sides of the picture.

**Climbing to the levels of the great through biography.** Why do we read biography? Our first thought is probably "to know the lives of great men." Many biographies are stories of high achievement, and we read to find out how it was done. What manner of human being was able to rise above his fellows and stamp his name upon the memory of the nation? We eagerly follow the dramatic crises in the lives of great military heroes — Washington, Jackson, Lee, Grant. We watch the steering of our ship of state by Hamilton, Jefferson, Webster, and Lincoln. Literature becomes more lucid as we learn of

the varied careers of great authors like Poe, Emerson, Walt Whitman, and Mark Twain. Science takes on new meaning as we view the assembled achievements of Burbank and Edison. The problems involved in business and labor are laid out for us in the lives of Carnegie, Ford, Rockefeller, and Gompers. In whatever field of enterprise our prime interest lies we may find recorded lives to point the way toward the crown of accomplishment. And this intimate association with greatness makes us feel temporarily on the same high footing. We, too, are lifted out of the commonplace into the heroic. Our pulses quicken; our resolves strengthen; we envision our own future as building on a powerful past.

Biography often clarifies history. But the value of reading biography is not limited to the inspiration that comes from acquaintance with the careers of great men. Biography may, for instance, be an excellent approach to the study of history. Thomas Carlyle, the famous English historian, declares in his *Heroes and Hero Worship*, "Universal history is at the bottom the history of the great men who have worked here." To get at the truth of the past, he says, we must study not movements and state papers, but the biographies of men. And even if to us movements seem more important in the study of history than they did to Carlyle, we may still find biography the best entrance to that field. As we read about the men, we see them acting before a background of public events, and we come to a better understanding of their times and the movements in which they were involved. American history, which is essentially the story of the extending frontier, is perhaps best told in the biographies of pioneers, from Captain John Smith to Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh. Sometimes the chief persons in the book are themselves in no sense prominent; indeed, in some of our best records of an earlier day the leading character's one claim to immortality is the biography itself. Particularly is this true of that in the form of diary or letters, such as *A Confederate Girl's Diary* by Sarah Morgan Dawson, or *Two Years before the Mast* by Richard Henry Dana, Jr. (see page 1017). Often books of this sort make the past living and real to us in a way that an ordinary history book never does.

Removing prejudice through biography. Still another reason for reading biography is to enlarge our human sympathy and rid ourselves of unreasonable prejudices. Often we dislike persons or whole classes of people just because we do not know them. Acquaintance brings understanding. Read Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* and come to a better appreciation of the American Negro; read

Rose Cohen's *Out of the Shadow* and learn to sympathize with the struggles of the foreigner in this country. If you are a Northerner with any traces of "Civil War" bitterness, read Thomas Nelson Page's *Robert E. Lee, Man and Soldier* to revere a true American who sorrowfully fought against the flag he loved because he considered it his duty. If you are a Southerner, read Lloyd Lewis's *Sherman, Fighting Prophet* to see how this general hated the measures to which military necessity drove him. If you are scornful of awkward farm boys, read the notable career of Hamlin Garland. If you think that all actors are trivial or unprincipled, read E. H. Sothern's *The Melancholy Tale of Me* for a view of a great artist and a true man amid the colorful life behind the footlights. If you find yourself becoming anti-any-group, read a good biography of one of its leaders. You will learn that "there are two sides to every question"; and you will grow into a much broader-minded, more intelligent, more useful man or woman.

**Rubbing elbows with interesting personalities.** Perhaps the pleasantest feature of reading biography is that while it is inspiring us to higher achievement, leading us into the study of history, or enlarging our sympathies it is also making us acquainted with interesting personalities. Sam Houston's life may or may not arouse our latent capacity for leadership, but acquaintance with the man Houston certainly adds spice to life. We may or may not care for the study of history as such, but Lincoln, Cleveland, and Theodore Roosevelt are worth-while friends to have at one's side throughout life. We may or may not shed prejudices through the reading of biography, but we cannot help enjoying broadening our acquaintance among other races, nationalities, and social classes. Interesting people! That is the center of biography. Buffalo Bill, P. T. Barnum, Mark Twain, Brigham Young! Clara Barton, Helen Keller, Jane Addams, Malvina Hoffman! John James Audubon, Lincoln Steffens, Thomas Edison, Dr. Arthur Hertzler! Actors, authors, pioneers, scientists! The list is endless.

### PHINEAS TAYLOR BARNUM (1810-1891)

Barnum was the most amazing showman our country has produced. From the point of view of biography one is tempted to apply to the man himself the title he gave his circus, "The Greatest Show on Earth."

He was born in Bethel, Connecticut, where his father was a tavernkeeper.

The boy early showed a gift for salesmanship and for capitalizing the gullibility of his fellow men. His first major enterprise in showmanship was to buy an old Negro woman, the reputed nurse of George Washington, and take her about the countryside with great profit to himself. The autopsy at her death, however, proved her age to be a fraud. The museum which made him a national figure is described in the following selection. Later he brought Jenny Lind, the "Swedish Nightingale," to this country and is said to have taken in seven hundred thousand dollars for her concerts alone. After he had gone bankrupt on a clock factory and lost two museums by fire, he established his circus, which perpetuated his name after his death. Mingling in politics, he was four times elected to the Connecticut legislature, but was defeated for Congress. His *Autobiography* and his later books of a personal nature have given us a vivid picture of the man; for though they are exaggerated and sometimes untruthful in detail, they show through that very fault the essential core of the man's personality. His colorful career has lent itself to the making of a successful movie — a suitable immortality for the tireless showman.

The chapter which follows is taken from *Barnum* by M. R. Werner. Mr. Werner has proved himself one of our especially able modern biographers. His attention has gone to picturesque personalities, such as Brigham Young and William Jennings Bryan, or to men in business and politics.

## BARNUM'S AMERICAN MUSEUM

by M. R. WERNER (1897- )

At thirty-two Barnum described himself as being "at the foot of fortune's ladder," with a wife and two children to support. Scudder's American Museum in New York was for sale for fifteen thousand dollars. Barnum told a friend that he proposed to buy it with "brass — for silver and gold have I none." How his native "brass" succeeded is a long tale, but he eventually gained possession of it and entered upon an amazing career of entertaining and often hoodwinking the public.

BESIDES his notorious curiosities, Barnum enlarged the lecture room of the museum, and presented regular dramatic performances there. He felt that what he called the "moral drama" would pay better than anything that was attractively immoral; and the "moral drama" was more palatable to his own conscience, for from childhood until his last year he had a sincere religious fear of impropriety in public presentation. The greatest manifestation of Barnum's genius for theatrical management in this country was his instinctive

realization that the largest part of the community is eminently respectable in public, and it was what, more than anything else, contributed to his financial success, that Barnum catered to the reputable who still retained vestiges of curiosity. Many persons who would not be seen in a theater visited regularly the museum lecture room — Barnum would never consent to calling it a theater — where the moral dramas of *Joseph and His Brethren*, *Moses*, and *The Drunkard* were performed. One afternoon a New England lady walked into Barnum's office and sat down on the sofa. She examined Barnum curiously for a minute, and then remarked that he looked "much like other common folks, after all."

"Mr. Barnum," she said, "I never went to any museum before, nor to any place of amusement or public entertainment, except our school exhibitions; and I have sometimes felt that they even may be wicked, because some parts of the dialogue seemed frivolous; but I have heard so much of your 'moral dramas,' and the great good you are doing for the rising generation, that I thought I must come here and see for myself."

At that moment the gong announcing the beginning of the show in the lecture room rang. The lady jumped from the sofa. "Are the services about to commence?" she asked anxiously.

There was the noise of shuffling feet as the crowd hurried to the seats. "Yes," said Barnum, "the congregation is now going up." Barnum wrote concerning his moral performances: "I resolved, as far as possible, to elevate and refine such amusements as I dispensed. Even Shakespeare's dramas were shorn of their objectionable features when placed upon my stage."

E. A. Sothern, Tony Pastor, and Barney Williams received their first stage training on the stage of Barnum's lecture room. On holidays performances were given every hour throughout the afternoon and evening, and Barnum is given credit in histories of the theater for originating the continuous performance, which has since proved so popular in vaudeville.

These continuous programs on holidays were very popular, and on the first Fourth of July of Barnum's management of the museum so many people visited the building that the sale of tickets was stopped. This Barnum described as "exceedingly harrowing to my feelings." He noted sadly that thousands were waiting outside to purchase tickets, and that those inside did not seem in a hurry to leave. Barnum ordered his carpenter to build a temporary flight of stairs at the rear of the building, which opened out into Ann Street. At three o'clock

that afternoon this exit was opened, but much money had been lost. When, on the next St. Patrick's Day, Barnum was informed in advance that the Irish population intended to visit the museum in large numbers, he opened the rear exit again. Before noon the museum was crowded, and the sale of tickets had to be stopped. Barnum rushed to the rear exit and asked how many hundreds had passed out that way. He was told that three persons had used it during the whole morning, for the visitors had brought their dinners and intended to remain in the museum all day and night. Barnum hurriedly called his sign painter and ordered a sign in large letters

### TO THE EGRESS

This was nailed over the rear door. Some of the Irish visitors spelled out the sign, "To the Aigress," and many remarked, "Sure, that's an animal we haven't seen," and found themselves on Ann Street, with no chance of re-entering the museum.

It was on his first Fourth of July in the museum that Barnum exhibited another instance of his ingenuity in the face of a difficulty. In order to make the most of the holiday by utilizing the publicity value of the American flag, Barnum fastened a string of large flags across Broadway, tying one end to the museum and the other to a tree in St. Paul's churchyard. Several days before Independence Day, Barnum had visited the vestrymen of St. Paul's and requested permission to use the tree in the churchyard, but they called his request insulting and talked of sacrilege. On the Fourth of July he gave orders for the flags to be attached, as he had originally planned. . . . The flags attracted huge crowds, and at half-past nine in the morning two indignant vestrymen entered Barnum's office and demanded that they be detached from their church immediately. Barnum answered pleasantly that he would go into the street with them and see what could be done. He looked at the flags and remarked solemnly that they were a beautiful sight. He argued with the vestrymen that he always had stopped his Free Music for the Million when they held their services, and he merely requested this favor in return. One of the vestrymen lost patience and shouted that unless Barnum took down the flags within ten minutes he would cut them down. The crowd was attracted by the angry gestures. Barnum suddenly took off his coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves, and shouted in his sonorous voice, tinged with anger, loudly enough for all in the crowd to overhear, "I should like to see you dare to cut down the American flag on the Fourth of July; you must be a Britisher to make such a threat, but

I'll show you a thousand pairs of Yankee hands in two minutes, if you dare to take down the stars and stripes on this great birthday of American freedom." In a moment the vestrymen were surrounded by several heavy, angry men, who threatened varied punishment. The poor bewildered vestrymen disappeared quietly from the crowd, and Barnum with obsequious smiles enjoyed his triumph.

Barnum was apparently indefatigable in his personal interest in the museum and in his personal efforts to make it ever more popular. He often appeared before his audiences with stunts or speeches, because he knew he could entertain them, and because he liked to think that they were interested in him. When Peale, of Peale's Museum, presented an actor who pretended to conduct experiments in mesmerism, Barnum personally conducted his own experiments in animal magnetism from the stage of the moral lecture room. A young girl, carefully trained in advance, sat on the stage. Barnum made a few passes with his hand in front of her, and she was then under his control; she raised her hands when he requested her to do so, grimaced when he put tobacco in his mouth, and smiled when he ate candy. Then it was his practice to turn to the audience and offer to forfeit fifty dollars if he could not put any member of the audience in the same state within five minutes. At the end of three minutes the volunteer was, of course, wide awake. Barnum would look at his watch, remark that he had two minutes, which was plenty of time, and offer to demonstrate to the audience that a person mesmerized was a person insensible to pain, by cutting off one of the fingers of the small girl, who was still asleep. He would take out his knife, feel the sharp edge, and turn toward the girl, who had meanwhile fled behind the scenes in a fright that delighted the audience. Barnum would say in an astonished tone of voice, "Then she was wide awake, was she?"

His volunteer from the audience usually answered, "Of course she was, she was wide awake all the time."

"I suppose so," was Barnum's answer, "and, my dear sir, I promised that you should be 'in the same state' at the end of five minutes, and as I believe you are so, I do not forfeit fifty dollars." This type of trick never seemed to anger, rather than to amuse, the audiences.

No such trickery was too much for Barnum, and he carried out a similar deception on a public scale with no harm to his reputation and no qualms of conscience. In June of 1843 he attended the Bunker Hill celebration, where Daniel Webster delivered a stirring oration, but Barnum was just as interested in an old canvas tent near the Bunker Hill Monument as he was in the ceremonies of the day. He found in



that tent a herd of fifteen one-year-old calf buffaloes, which he immediately purchased for seven hundred dollars; a scheme by which he could utilize these buffaloes had hatched in his mind almost as soon as he saw them. The animals were docile and tired, for they had been driven east from the Western plains. At Barnum's order they were brought to New York and then transported to a New Jersey barn near Hoboken. Barnum hired their former owner, C. D. French, to take care of the animals for thirty dollars per month, because French understood the lasso. The newspapers shortly afterward announced that a herd of wild buffaloes, captured in the Rocky Mountains, was passing through New York soon on its way to Europe, in charge of the very men who had captured the animals, and during the next few days suggestions appeared in the newspapers that it would be a fine thing for New York if the owners of these buffaloes could be induced to present a buffalo chase on a racecourse near New York, demonstrating to the Eastern population the use of the lasso and the ferocity of the buffalo. One of the correspondents expressed it as his sincere opinion that it would be worth a dollar to see such a sight, and that he for one would be willing to pay that amount. Another estimated that no less than fifty thousand persons would be interested in a buffalo chase without the danger but with the thrills, and other obliging correspondents suggested places for the hunt, including the racecourse at Hoboken, New Jersey. Before long advertisements appeared in all the newspapers, and handbills were circulated throughout New York announcing that there would be a

Grand Buffalo Hunt, Free of Charge — At Hoboken, on Thursday, August 31, at 3, 4, and 5 o'clock P.M. Mr. C. D. French, one of the most daring and experienced hunters of the West, has arrived thus far on his way to Europe with a herd of buffaloes, captured by himself, near Santa Fe. He will exhibit a method of hunting the wild buffaloes, and throwing the lasso, by which the animals were captured in their most wild and untamed state. This is perhaps one of the most exciting and difficult feats that can be performed, requiring at the same time the most expert horsemanship and greatest skill and dexterity. Every man, woman, and child can here witness the wild sports of the Western prairies, as the exhibition is to be free to all, and will take place on the extensive grounds and racecourse of Messrs. Stevens, within a few rods of the Hoboken ferry.

The public was further assured that "no possible danger need be apprehended, as a double railing has been put around the whole course, to prevent the possibility of the buffaloes approaching the multitude."

These announcements mystified and delighted New York. Who was the city's anonymous benefactor? Who supplied such entertainment free of charge and kept modestly in the background? Barnum meanwhile had purchased the rights to the receipts of all the ferryboats which crossed between New York and Hoboken on August 31, 1843, and extra ferryboats were provided for the day. The weather was clear, and the boats, under the administration of Captain Barnum, were crowded to the railings with adventurers. Twenty-four thousand people went to Hoboken that day. They stood on the railings and clutched the awnings to support themselves, and each paid six and a quarter cents going and the same to return.

When the crowds arrived in Hoboken, they waited in the arena for the wild buffaloes, who finally appeared in reluctant and tame parade of their alleged ferocity. The animals were thin and pale from lack of nourishment during their first master's patronage, and although they had been crammed with extra rations of oats for several days they refused at the outset to be wild. C. D. French, "one of the most daring and experienced hunters of the West," dressed and painted as an Indian, poked his wild buffaloes with a goad, but the most they would do for the twenty-four thousand interested spectators was to trot. There was much laughter and shouting at their recalcitrance, and the noise made by the crowd frightened the nervous buffaloes so much that they galloped from the inclosure in terror and threw the spectators, who believed that they had actually grown wild, into a panic. The buffaloes took refuge from their oppressors in a near-by swamp, and all that C. D. French could do would not persuade them to return to the racecourse. He finally lassoed one of them, and entertained the crowd with this beast, and with exhibitions of lassoing on horses and horsemen. No one suspected the ferryboat arrangement, and no one suspected Barnum. It was after midnight when the last of the crowds succeeded in getting home from Hoboken, but, apparently, a good time was had by all, for there were no riots, and the receipts of the ferryboats turned over to Barnum amounted to thirty-five hundred dollars. After the exhibition Barnum sent his buffaloes to Camden, New Jersey, where they attracted Philadelphia crowds in the same manner. Some of the herd then went to England and were sold, while the others were fattened on a farm and sold for buffalo steak in Fulton Market at fifty cents per pound. In order that the museum might profit by the advertisement, Barnum made public his responsibility for the Great Buffalo Hunt.

Sometime after his success with the buffaloes, Barnum presented

the first Wild West Show New York had seen. He engaged a band of Indians from Iowa, among whom were impressive men, beautiful squaws, and two or three papooses. The Indians appeared on the stage of the moral lecture room in real war dances, which they performed with all the vigor and realistic interpretation of their savage origin. In fact, it was necessary to rope them in, for fear that in their frenzy toward the end of a dance they might forget that they were merely players, and make for members of the audience; for Barnum's Indians had never before seen a railroad or a steamboat, and scalps were not yet obsolete in their minds. They seemed thoroughly under the impression that they were not acting but living, which in one particular caused the proprietor of the American Museum some expense. After a week of war dances, Barnum suggested a change of program, including an Indian wedding dance. The interpreter explained, and the chief agreed. On Monday afternoon when the first change to the wedding dance was to take place, Barnum was informed by the chief that he must supply a red woolen blanket as a wedding present for the bridegroom to give to the father of the bride, an inviolable Indian custom. After each performance the chief insisted that he must have another new blanket for the next performance, and when Barnum attempted to explain that the wedding was only "make believe," the chief gave forth an ugly "Ugh!" terrifying Barnum into spending one hundred and twenty dollars for twelve red woolen blankets for the rest of the week.

These special exhibitions were supplemented by flower shows, dog shows, and poultry shows at the museum, and Barnum, soon after he became manager, decided that he must have a baby show. He organized such an exhibition with graduated scales of prizes for triplets, the fattest baby, the most beautiful baby, and the handsomest twins. The main prize of one hundred dollars for the most perfect baby was a source of considerable difficulty. Barnum thought that it would be a fine thing for him to award this prize himself, a fine thing in publicity for himself, and also for the baby, who could say in later years that he had been personally selected as unique by P. T. Barnum. In later years he did meet many men and women who claimed that honor, but at the time of the awards the defeated mothers stormed about Barnum, and their indignation could not be appeased until he announced that he would award a second prize of one hundred dollars to the baby selected by a committee of mothers. Whereupon each mother became the enemy of every other, and Barnum's one hundred dollars was safe. In deciding future baby con-

tests, however, he sent in written reports and was not to be disturbed for the rest of the day.

In November, 1842, Barnum stopped one night at the Franklin Hotel in Bridgeport, Connecticut, which was kept by his brother, Philo F. Barnum. His brother mentioned that there was a dwarf in Bridgeport, who played daily in the streets and was accepted by the rest of the population as a natural curiosity. Barnum asked his brother to bring the child to the Franklin Hotel, and as soon as he saw this dwarf he realized that here was a natural curiosity who could be transformed by instruction and publicity into a unique and profitable one. The child was the smallest Barnum had ever seen, and was in excellent health, without any deformities. He was two feet, one inch in height and weighed fifteen pounds. His hair was flaxen, and his eyes dark; his cheeks were pink and his whole appearance gave the impression of health, symmetry, and whimsical charm on a lovely, diminutive scale. He was very bashful, and Barnum only learned after difficulty that his name was Charles S. Stratton, and that he was five years old. Barnum visited Mr. and Mrs. Sherwood E. Stratton, the child's parents, and after some persuasion they consented to exhibit their son at Barnum's museum for three dollars per week and board for himself and his mother. Barnum hired him for four weeks only, because at the time he was doubtful whether a five-year-old child who was only two feet in height might not grow before long to a normality that would make him mediocre.

The dwarf and his mother arrived in New York on Thanksgiving Day, 1842, and Barnum had something to be thankful for that day. Mrs. Stratton was astonished and somewhat annoyed when she noticed that her son was announced in large handbills as "General Tom Thumb," a dwarf eleven years of age, "just arrived from England." The "just arrived from England" was the first instance of a method Barnum often repeated. He realized early in his career the love of the American mind for an importation, and he never advertised anything as domestic if he could possibly deceive his patrons into believing that he had incurred much trouble and expense by importing it from abroad, where its popularity was always stupendous. He hoped, patriotically, in his autobiography that such deception might check "our disgraceful preference for foreigners."

Barnum made his dwarf eleven years old for fear that the public might not believe that a child five years old would not grow beyond his present height. In the various pamphlets concerning the life of General Tom Thumb, which were sold at his exhibitions, it is re-

corded that when he was born he weighed nine pounds, two ounces, more than the average weight of a newborn baby, and that at five months he had ceased to grow and weighed only fifteen pounds. His weight of fifteen pounds and his height of two feet, one inch, were said to have remained unchanged from the age of five months until the age of five years and for many years thereafter.

The change of name from Charles S. Stratton to General Tom Thumb was a stroke of Barnum's inspiration, and it contributed largely to the General's subsequent success. Tom Thumb is the most appropriate name a dwarf ever had, and, besides, it possessed the advantage of some familiarity from the story of the legendary Tom Thumb, of whom it will be remembered:

In Arthur's court Tom Thumbe did live,  
A man of mickle might.  
The best of all the table round,  
And eke a doughty knight;  
His stature but an inch in height,  
Or quarter of a span;  
Then think you not this little knight  
Was prov'd a valiant man?

According to nursery lore, the legendary Tom Thumbe was swallowed by a cow when he crossed the cow's blade of grass but was soon delivered up again from the cow's stomach, only to meet his death by a bumblebee after a series of valiant adventures. Barnum's addition of "General" to Tom Thumb enriched the name by a pompous mockery that was more valuable because of its incongruity.

General Tom Thumb was soon domesticated to the ways of public exhibition. Barnum taught his pupil day and night new jokes and old roles, which he learned quickly, for the child, according to Barnum, had a love of the ludicrous and a humorous charm. When he was ready to make his debut, Barnum took General Tom Thumb first on a tour of the newspaper offices, and even invaded the home of one newspaper editor, who happened to be eating dinner. Tom Thumb danced between the tumblers and hopped over the roast. James Gordon Bennett wrote in the *Herald* on December 15, 1842: "We were visited yesterday by the comical little gentleman who is at present holding nightly levees at the American Museum. He is certainly the smallest specimen of a man we have ever seen."

The General's popularity was immediate, and after the first four weeks' engagement was finished, Barnum re-engaged him for one year at seven dollars a week, with a bonus of fifty dollars at the end of the

engagement. It is clear that neither General Tom Thumb nor his father had any idea of the value of a dwarf, and Barnum took advantage of the age of the boy and the ignorance of his father. Barnum also retained the privilege of sending the General on a tour of the country. Before the end of the year Barnum increased Tom Thumb's salary to twenty-five dollars per week, and he assures us that the General deserved the raise. Besides exhibiting frequently at the museum, where he sang songs, danced and told stories in the pert and saucy manner of people who are too small to be slapped, General Tom Thumb was sent to other cities, where he made money for Barnum and advertised the American Museum.

At the same time as the exhibition of General Tom Thumb in New York, Barnum presented at the museum two famous giants, M. Bihin, the tall, thin French giant, and Colonel Goshen, a portly Arab. The giants were amiable enough, but jealous of each other's success, and quarreled furiously one day after they had engaged in a glorious bout of name-calling. They seized clubs and medieval swords on exhibition in cases, and made for each other, until Barnum interfered. He informed them that he had no objection to their fighting, maiming or killing each other, but they were both under engagement to him, and if there was to be a duel, it must be duly advertised and take place on the stage of the lecture room. "No performance of yours would be a greater attraction, and if you kill each other, our engagement can end with your duel," Barnum assured them. The giants enjoyed the humor of the situation, and lived in peace until the end of their engagement.

After the contract with General Tom Thumb expired, Barnum engaged him for another year at fifty dollars per week and all his expenses, with the right to exhibit him in Europe. The museum was so successful and operating with so little friction after less than three years that Barnum was looking for new worlds to conquer, and he took his General under his arm and went to Europe. Passage was booked on the packet ship *Yorkshire* for Liverpool, and General Tom Thumb, his father and mother, the General's tutor, Professor Guillaudeu, and Barnum made ready to sail on January 18, 1844. Barnum made use of the General at the museum until the last moment before sailing. Advertisements appeared in the newspapers of the day announcing that the opportunity to see General Tom Thumb was rapidly slipping away. When the boat was delayed by adverse winds and tides, the General remained another day at the museum, and thousands of people visited him in a desperate attempt to get

a last look. The *Evening Post* announced as an item of news on January 16, 1844:

A few hours more remain for General Tom Thumb to be seen at the American Museum, as the packet in which he has engaged passage to England does not sail today, in consequence of the easterly winds now prevailing. He may be seen throughout the entire day and evening; and at three and seven o'clock P.M. there will be grand performances; at each of which the General appears on the stage in the same characters which have excited so much admiration and applause of late.

The next day the weather was still bad, and people stormed the museum. On the day of the sailing, January 19, General Tom Thumb was on exhibition until eleven o'clock in the morning; the boat sailed at noon. He was escorted to the dock by the municipal brass band, and more than ten thousand persons saw him off. It was estimated that more than eighty thousand persons had visited General Tom Thumb at the museum.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. List the various characteristics of Barnum you can discover from this selection. Are his motives admirable or not? Do you consider him dishonest? Discuss the ethics of his various schemes; also their ingenuity.
2. What do we have at present comparable to Barnum's museum? to his method of advertising?
3. Is the public as easily fooled today as in Barnum's time? Do people enjoy being fooled?

### *For Your Vocabulary*

4. Have you ever used the dictionary to discover odd and picturesque origins of words? According to modern usage, the *vestiges* (page 373) of curiosity Barnum's customers retained were merely faint traces. But the original meaning of *vestige* was a footprint or track. When you look up a word in the dictionary, notice the original meaning given first and you will find many such curious developments in meaning. When anything reaches such a stage of disuse that only *vestiges* of it remain, it is *obsolete* (page 378). What does the author mean when he says that scalps were not yet *obsolete* in the minds of Barnum's Indians? Words, customs, or laws that have passed out of active use are said to be *obsolete*.

*For Ambitious Students*

5. Barnum is an interesting person to follow up. You would enjoy reading Barnum's own version of his career in his *Autobiography, Struggles and Triumphs*. The rest of Werner's account is fascinating, and H. W. Root's *Boy's Life of Barnum* is easy reading. Musically inclined students would enjoy reading the chapter on Jenny Lind and Barnum in Richard Aldrich's *Musical Discourses*.

6. Composition:

- a. Write up some experience of your childhood in taking part in a circus or show as if it were a chapter in your autobiography.
- b. Describe some museum, circus, or fair you have visited.
- c. Report orally or in writing on the career of Jenny Lind.

### SAM HOUSTON (1793-1863)

The story of Sam Houston reads like an epic. His was an epic background, stretching from the nation's capital to the Indian territory on the west and into the shadow of Spain in the southwest. He knew the life of the frontier community, of the military camp, of state and national capitals, and of the Indian tribe. He was governor of two states, member of Congress from one and of the United States Senate from the other, and President of the Republic of Texas. In the intervals of his public career he lived as a member of the tribe with the Cherokee Indians, who had adopted him as a boy and had given him the name of "The Raven." After his first spectacular rise to fame collapsed with his resignation as Governor of Tennessee, he returned to his Indian friends; and from the Cherokees he went on to his second great achievement in leading Texas to independence. But Fortune, though she smiled often and brightly on Houston, was never constant to him. After his brilliant success in Texas as general, President, and Senator, he was forced from the governor's chair in 1861 when he bitterly opposed secession. To Houston, bringing Texas into the United States was his greatest triumph; and it was in the shadow of defeat that he died in 1863, before he could know that the union was to be preserved. His biographer spoke truth in saying that his "finger tips had touched the stars and felt them change to dust."

Marquis James, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1930 for his life of Houston, *The Raven*, was a successful journalist before he became a biographer. Working with the historian's care for accuracy and with the journalist's flair for interesting narrative, he has made his books read like novels while faithfully recreating true happenings. Since *The Raven* he has published a two-volume biography of another great frontier warrior and statesman who was a close friend of Houston's — Andrew Jackson.



## SAM HOUSTON AT SAN JACINTO

*by* MARQUIS JAMES (1891—)

Just before the battle of San Jacinto (St. Hyacinth) the affairs of Texas were in perilous condition. One brave force had been wiped out in the disaster at the Alamo; and during the retreat in process at the beginning of this narrative Houston received news that the best-trained army of the Texans had been trapped at Goliad, and after surrender had been treacherously slaughtered. Texans were fleeing in droves toward the safety of the United States beyond the Sabine. Nor was the precarious military situation Houston's only worry. The hastily organized government of the young republic was proving more hindrance than help to its one able commander left in the field. As you read, you will see that Houston was as busy keeping his little army together as he was planning his campaign against Santa Anna, the Mexican president and commander.

WORD THAT Santa Anna had abruptly abandoned his attempt to cross at San Felipe found Houston in a buoyant mood. He had just received his long-awaited guns — two iron six-pounders, the gift of friends in Cincinnati. Clad in a worn leather jacket, he was watching the camp blacksmith cut up old horseshoes for artillery ammunition, when a young soldier said that the lock on his rifle would not work. "All right, son," said General Houston, "set her down and call around in an hour." The boy came back, stammering an apology. He was a recruit, he said, and did not know that the man pointed out to him as a blacksmith was the commander in chief. "My friend, he told you right. I am a very good blacksmith," replied Houston taking up the gun and snapping the lock. "She is in order now."

The next two days Houston devoted to moving his army across the Brazos, while Santa Anna crossed near Fort Bend. The Texans encamped on the premises of a well-to-do settler named Donahoe, who demanded that Houston stop the men from cutting his timber for firewood. General Houston reprimanded the wood gatherers. Under no circumstances, he said, should they lay ax to another of Citizen Donahoe's trees. Could they not see that Citizen Donahoe's rail fence would afford the fuel required? That night the army gallants scraped up an acquaintance with some girls in a refugee camp, turned Mr. Donahoe out of house, and held a dance.

When the army left Donahoe's at dawn Moseley Baker <sup>1</sup> demanded

<sup>1</sup> Baker: one of the discontented followers who, with the Willy Martin mentioned a little later, had already tried to stir up mutiny against Houston.

to know whether Houston intended to intercept Santa Anna at Harrisburg<sup>1</sup> or to retreat to the Sabine. The general declined to answer. Seventeen miles from Donahoe's the road forked, the left branch leading to Nacogdoches and the Sabine, the right branch to Harrisburg. If Houston should attempt to take the left road, Captain Baker proclaimed that he would "then and there be deposed from command." Rain slowed the march, however, and only by borrowing draft oxen from Mrs. Mann of a refugee band that followed the army did the troops by nightfall reach Sam McCurley's, a mile short of the crossroads.

Next morning a torrential rain failed to extinguish the excitement in the ranks. Which road would Houston take? The menacing Baker thundered warnings, but the Sabine route had its partisans among the troops. All of the refugees favored it. The commander in chief treated the commotion as if it did not exist and without comment sent the advance guard over the Harrisburg Road.

A wail arose from the refugees. There was a halt and a wrangle which Houston terminated by ordering Wily Martin to escort the refugees and watch for Indian hostilities to the eastward. The commander in chief thought this cleared the path for his pursuit of Santa Anna, but he had reckoned without Mrs. Mann. She demanded the return of her oxen. Wagon Master Rohrer, a giant in buckskin with a voice like a bull, brushed the protest aside as too trivial for the attention of a man of affairs, and cracking his long whip, addressed the oxen in the sparkling idiom of the trail. Whereupon Mrs. Mann produced from beneath her apron a pistol and, if rightly overheard, addressed Mr. Rohrer in terms equally exhilarating. General Houston arrived in time to compose the difficulty with his usual courtly deference to the wishes of a lady.

Three or four hundred men followed Martin, or departed independently, leaving Houston with less than a thousand to follow Santa Anna, who rode with a magnificent suite at the head of a picked force of veterans. But Santa Anna was now the pursued and Houston the pursuer. General Santa Anna commanded the center of three armies. The rains, however, had fought on Houston's side, and there was a chance that by fast marching he might catch the Mexican commander in chief out of reach of his co-operating columns. Another factor in Houston's favor was the Sabine retreat story. Houston had never

<sup>1</sup> *Harrisburg*: The capital of the Republic had been transferred only a few days earlier from Washington on the Brazos to Harrisburg as a place of greater safety. Harrisburg is at the edge of the present city of Houston.

intended to fall back to the Sabine, but the report was so persistently circulated and never denied that the Mexicans included it in their strategic calculations.

Over the boggy prairie path, by courtesy the Harrisburg Road, Houston drove the little column fearfully. Nothing delayed the advance. Wagons were carried over quagmires on the backs of the men. The greatest trial was the guns. In camp the enthusiastic soldiers had christened them the "Twin Sisters," but now they thought of other names.

On the morning of April eighteenth the army reached the Buffalo Bayou, opposite Harrisburg, having covered fifty-five miles in two and a half days. Mounts and men were dead beat. Houston had never been in this part of the country before. He spent his nights in constant touch with the scouts and in the study of a crude map, covered with cabalistic pencilings of his own.

The army rested. Harrisburg was in ashes; Santa Anna had come and gone. Deaf Smith<sup>1</sup> swam the bayou and toward evening returned with two prisoners, a Mexican scout and a courier. The courier's saddlebag bore the name of W. B. Travis<sup>2</sup> — souvenir of the Alamo. It contained useful information. Santa Anna had dashed upon Harrisburg with eight hundred troops in an effort to capture President Burnet, leaving Cos to follow. But the raid netted only three printers who had stuck to their cases in the office of Gail Borden's *Texas Telegraph*. Editor Borden and the government had fled to Galveston Island in the nick of time, with Santa Anna racing in futile pursuit to take them before they left the mainland. On his soiled map Houston traced the situation of his quarry, not ten miles away, groping among the unfamiliar marshes that indented Galveston Bay and the estuary of a certain nebulous Rio San Jacinto. Sending his army to bed, the commander in chief continued to pore over the chart. Two hours before dawn he slept a little.

After the daybreak stand-to General Houston delivered a speech. The "ascending eloquence and earnestness" put one impressionable young soldier in mind of "the halo encircling the brow of our Savior." "Victory is certain!" Sam Houston said. "Trust in God and fear not! And remember the Alamo! Remember the Alamo!"

"Remember the Alamo!" the ranks roared back. They had a battle cry.

<sup>1</sup> Deaf Smith: a famous scout, for whom a county in Texas was named.

<sup>2</sup> W. B. Travis: commander of the garrison at the Alamo when it was annihilated by the Mexicans. It was this massacre which furnished the Texan battle cry.

There was just time for a short letter to Anna Raguet's<sup>1</sup> father: "This morning we are in preparation to meet Santa Anna. . . . It is wisdom growing out of necessity."

The pick of the army advanced, leaving the sick and the wagons with a rear guard. After a swift march Houston made a perilous crossing of Buffalo Bayou, using the floor torn from a cabin as a raft. The column hid in a woods until dark, and then advanced warily, encircled by the scouts under Deaf Smith and Henry Karnes. At a narrow bridge over a stream — Vince's bridge over Vince's Bayou, men who knew the country said — the column trampled the cold ashes of Santa Anna's campfires. The night was black and the advance painfully slow. Equipment had been muffled so as to make no sound. A low-spoken order passed from rank to rank to be ready on the instant to attack. Rifles were clutched a little closer. One mile, two miles beyond the bridge, down a steep ravine and stealthily up the other side crept the column.

At two o'clock in the morning the word came to break ranks. In the damp grass the men dropped beside their arms. With the salt of the sea in their nostrils they slept for an hour; then formed up and stumbled on until daybreak, when their general concealed them in a patch of timber.

Some of the Vince brothers' cows were grazing in this wood. The army had a commissary! Throats were noiselessly cut and General Houston had given permission to build fires when a party of scouts dashed up. They had driven off a Mexican patrol and learned that Santa Anna was on the road to Lynch's Ferry. The butchers were called from their delectable task and the fires pulled apart. The men fell in to the banging of muskets and the clank of ramrods as old charges were fired<sup>2</sup> and fresh ones sent home. The breakfastless army headed for Lynch's Ferry, three miles eastward. Santa Anna approached the ferry from the south, with five miles to go.

From the crest of a grass-grown slope Houston's army got its first view of Lynch's Ferry, lying at the tip of a point of lowland where Buffalo Bayou flowed into the San Jacinto River. On the farther side of the river was a scattering of unpainted houses — the town of Lynchburg. Behind the town bulged a round hill, the side of which was covered with people who gazed for a moment at the column filing

<sup>1</sup> Anna Raguet: a young lady of Nacogdoches to whom Houston was very attentive at this time. <sup>2</sup> old charges were fired: so as to have fresh powder in the guns when the battle commenced.

down the slope, and then melted away. They were Texas Tories waiting to pilot Santa Anna toward the Sabine.

Having the choice of positions, Houston established himself in a wood of great oak trees, curtained with Spanish moss, that skirted the bayou just above its junction with the San Jacinto. He posted the infantry and cavalry in order of battle within the thick shelter, and placed the Twin Sisters on the edge of the trees so as to command the swelling savanna that lay in front of the woods. This semitropical prairie extended to the front for nearly a mile, thick with waving green grass, half as high as wheat. A woods bounded the prairie on the left, screening a treacherous swamp that bordered the San Jacinto. Swamp and river swung to the right, half enclosing the prairie and giving it a background of green a tone darker than the active young grass. Over this prairie Santa Anna must pass to gain the ferry.

The Texans were prepared to fight, but the presence of cows in the grass revealed the force of Napoleon's famous maxim.<sup>1</sup> Again the fires crackled, and this time steaks were sizzling on the spits when the scouts came galloping across the plain. They said that Santa Anna was advancing just beyond a rise. The Twin Sisters were wheeled out a little piece on the prairie. The infantry line crept to the edge of the woods.

Santa Anna's bugles blared beyond the swell. A dotted line of skirmishers bobbed into view, and behind it marched parallel columns of infantry and of cavalry with slender lances gleaming. Between the columns Santa Anna advanced a gun. The skirmishers parted to let the clattering artillerymen through.

The Twin Sisters were primed and loaded with broken horseshoes. General Houston, on a great white stallion, rode up and down the front of his infantry. Under partial cover of a clump of trees, three hundred yards from the Texan lines, the Mexican gun wheeled into position.

Joe Neill, commanding the Twin Sisters, gave the word for one gun to fire. *Crash* went the first shot by Sam Houston's artillery in the war. There had been no powder for practice rounds. Through the ragged smoke the Texans could see Mexican horses down and men working frantically at their piece. Their captain had been wounded and the gun carriage disabled.

*Crash!* The second Twin cut loose, and the Mexican gun replied.

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon's famous maxim: that an army travels on its stomach.

Its shot tore through the branches of the trees above the Texans' heads, causing a shower of twigs.

*Rat-tat!* The Mexican skirmishers opened fire and plumes of black dirt jumped in front of the Texas infantry. A ball glanced from a metal trimming on General Houston's bridle. Colonel Neill dropped with a broken hip.

The Texan infantrymen had held their beads on the dotted line for so long that their faces ached. Every dot was covered by ten rifles, for no Texan had to be told when he shot to shoot *at* something. A row of flaming orange jets rushed from the woods and expired in air; the dotted gray line sagged into the grass and did not reappear.

The Twin Sisters whanged away and the Mexican gun barked back, but the state of its carriage made accurate aim impossible. Santa Anna decided not to bring on a general engagement, and sent a detachment of dragoons to haul off the crippled gun. Dashing Sidney Sherman begged to take the cavalry and capture the Mexican field-piece, and finally Houston consented. Sherman lost two men and several horses, but failed to get the gun. General Houston gave him a dressing down that should have withered the leaves on the trees. A private by the conquering name of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar <sup>1</sup> who had borne himself courageously was promoted to command the cavalry regiment, numbering fifty-three.

Sherman was considerable of a camp hero just the same — he and Deaf Smith who had captured the ferryboat loaded with Mexican flour. Dough, rolled on sticks and baked by the fire, made the postponed meal notable, after which the men spread blankets by the fires and talked themselves to sleep over the big fight that was to take place in the morning. Less than a mile away, under the watchful eyes of Houston's scouts, flickered the campfires of the enemy.

On the twenty-first of April, 1836, reveille rolled at the usual hour of four, but a strange hand <sup>2</sup> tapped the drum. The commander in chief was asleep, with a coil of rope under his head. He had left instructions not to be disturbed. It was evident that the anticipated dawn attack would not take place. The ranks silently stood to until daylight, precisely as they had done every other morning, except that the commander in chief slept through it all. Nor did the soldier hum of breakfast time arouse him. It was full day when Sam Houston

<sup>1</sup> Lamar: later President of the Republic of Texas. <sup>2</sup> strange hand: Houston usually beat tattoo and reveille himself.

opened his eyes — after his first sleep of more than three hours in six weeks. He lay on his back, studying the sky. An eagle wheeled before the flawless blue. The commander in chief sprang to his feet. "The sun of Austerlitz,"<sup>1</sup> he said, "has risen again."

An eagle over the Cumberland<sup>2</sup> on that awful April night — an eagle over the muddier Rubicon<sup>3</sup> — an eagle above the plain of St. Hyacinth. Did these symbolic birds exist, or were they simply reflections of a mind drenched with Indian lore? The eagle was Sam Houston's medicine animal. When profoundly moved it was from the Indian part of his being and not the white-man part that unbidden prayers ascended.

The camp was in a fidget to attack. It could not fathom a commander who sauntered aimlessly under the trees in the sheer enjoyment, he said, of a good night's sleep. Deaf Smith rode up and dismounted. The lines of the old plainsman's leathery face were deep. His short square frame moved with a heavy tread. The scout was very weary. Night and day he and Henry Karnes had been the eyes of the army; and considering the tax of the other faculties that deafness imposed upon a scout, the achievements of Smith elude rational explanation.

"Santa Anna is getting reinforcements," he said in his high-pitched voice. And surely enough a line of pack mules was just visible beyond the swell in the prairie. "They've just come over our track. I'm going to tell the general he ought to burn Vince's bridge before any more come up."

After a talk with Smith, Houston told his commissary general, John Forbes, to find two sharp axes, and then strolled past a gathering of soldiers remarking that it wasn't often Deaf Smith could be fooled by a trick like that — Santa Anna marching men around and around to make it look like a reinforcement. Smith returned from another gallop on to the prairie. "The general was right," he announced loudly. "It's all a humbug." But privately he informed Houston that the reinforcement numbered five hundred and forty

<sup>1</sup> **Austerlitz**: a famous battle of Napoleon, in which both the relative numbers of men and the location of the forces resembled the situation at San Jacinto.

<sup>2</sup> **Cumberland**: When he was fleeing Tennessee after the mysterious break with his first wife and his resignation as Governor of Tennessee, an eagle swooping over the river boat cheered him with the thought that a great destiny awaited him in the West. <sup>3</sup> **muddier Rubicon**: Since the time when Julius Caesar launched his Gallic war by crossing the border stream, "crossing the Rubicon" has meant committing oneself to a momentous enterprise. In coming to Texas, Houston called the Red River, the boundary, his "muddier Rubicon."

men under Cos, which raised Santa Anna's force to the neighborhood of thirteen hundred and fifty. Houston's strength was slightly above eight hundred.

Houston later told Santa Anna that his reason for waiting for Cos was to avoid making "two bites of one cherry." But he did not care to see Filisola, who might turn up at any time with two or three thousand Mexicans. Handing the axes to Smith, Houston told him to destroy Vince's bridge. "And come back like eagles, or you will be too late for the day."

Unaware of these preparations, the camp was working itself into a state. To all appearance the general was wasting good time, and jealous officers were only too eager to place this construction on the situation. At noon John A. Wharton, the adjutant general, with whom the commander in chief was not on the most cordial terms, went from mess to mess, stirring up the men. "Boys, there is no other word today, but fight, fight!" Moseley Baker harangued his company. They must neither give nor ask quarter, he said. Resting on his saddle horn, Houston narrowly observed the Baker proceedings. He rode on to a mess that Wharton had just addressed. Everyone was boiling for a fight. "All right," observed the general. "Fight and be damned."

Houston called a council of war — the first and last, but one, of his career. The question he proposed was, "Shall we attack the enemy or await his attack upon us?" There was a sharp division of ideas. Houston expressed no opinion, and when the others had wrangled themselves into a thorough disagreement he dismissed the council.

At three-thirty o'clock the commander in chief abruptly formed his army for attack. At four o'clock he lifted his sword. A drum and fife raised the air of a love song, "Come to the Bower," and the last army of the Republic moved from the woods and slowly up the sloping plain of San Jacinto. The left of the line was covered by the swamp, the right by the Twin Sisters, Millard's forty-eight regulars, and Lamar's fifty cavalry. A company from Newport, Kentucky, displayed a white silk flag, embroidered with an amateurish figure of Liberty. (The Lone Star emblem was a later creation.) A glove of the first lieutenant's sweetheart bobbed from the staff. On the big white stallion Sam Houston rode up and down the front.

"Hold your fire, men. Hold your fire. Hold your fire."

The mastery of a continent was in contention between the champions of two civilizations — racial rivals and hereditary enemies, so



divergent in idea and method that suggestion of compromise was an affront. On an obscure meadow of bright grass, nursed by a water-course named on hardly any map, wet steel would decide which civilization should prevail on these shores and which submit in the clash of men and symbols impending — the conquistador and the frontiersman, the Inquisition<sup>1</sup> and the Magna Charta,<sup>2</sup> the rosary and the rifle.<sup>3</sup>

For ten of the longest minutes that a man ever lives, the single line poked through the grass. In front lay a barricade of Mexican pack-saddles and camp impedimenta, inert in the oblique rays of the sun.

"Hold your fire, men. Hold your fire."

Behind the Mexican line a bugle rang. A sketchy string of orange dots glowed from the packsaddles and a ragged rattle of musketry roused up a scolding swarm of birds from the trees on the Texans' left. A few Texans raised their rifles and let go at the dots.

"Hold your fire! Damn you, hold your fire!" General Houston spurred the white stallion to a gallop.

The orange dots continued to wink and die. The white stallion fell. Throwing himself upon a cavalryman's pony, Houston resumed his patrol of the line.

"Fight for your lives! Vince's bridge has been cut down!" It was Deaf Smith on a lathered mustang. Rather inaccurately, the soldiers understood Vince's bridge to be their sole avenue of retreat.

Twenty yards from the works, Houston made a signal with his hat. A blast of horseshoes from the Twin Sisters laid a section of the fragile breastwork flat. The infantrymen roared a volley and lunged forward drawing their hunting knives. "Remember the Alamo! Remember the Alamo!"

They swept over the torn barricade as if it had not been there. Shouts and yells and the pounding of hoofs smote their ears. Through keyholes in a pungent wall of smoke they saw gray-clad little figures, with chin straps awry, running back, kneeling and firing, and running back — toward some tents where greater masses of men were veering this way and that. The Texans pursued them. The pungent wall melted; the firing was not so heavy now, as the Texans were using their knives and the bayonets of Mexican guns. The surprise lacked nothing. Santa Anna had thought Houston would not, could not,

<sup>1</sup> **Inquisition:** medieval Spanish court of investigation famous for its severity  
<sup>2</sup> **Magna Charta:** medieval English bill of rights, a contrasting symbol to the Inquisition. <sup>3</sup> **the rosary and the rifle:** Catholic missionaries were the vanguard of the growing Spanish empire in America, while the American penetration was led by frontiersmen and hunters.

attack. In his carpeted marquee, he was enjoying a siesta when a drowsy sentinel on the barricade descried the Texan advance. Cos's men were sleeping off the fatigue of their night march. Cavalrymen were riding bareback to and from water. Others were cooking and cutting wood. Arms were stacked.

When the barrier was overrun, a general of brigade rallied a handful of men about a fieldpiece; all fell before the Texans' knives. An infantry colonel got together a following under cover of some trees; a Texas sharpshooter killed him, and the following scattered. Almonte, the chief of staff, rounded up four hundred men and succeeded in retreating out of the panic zone. Santa Anna rushed from his tent commanding everyone to lie down. A moment later he vaulted on a black horse and disappeared.

General Houston rode among the wreckage of the Mexican camp. He was on his third horse, and his right boot was full of blood. "A hundred steady men," he said, "could wipe us out." Except for a handful of regulars, the army had escaped control of its officers, and was pursuing, clubbing, knifing, shooting Mexicans wherever they were found. Fugitives plunged into the swamp and scattered over the prairie. "Me no Alamo! Me no Alamo!" Some cavalry bolted for bridgeless Vince's Bayou. The Texans rushed them down a vertical bank. A hundred men and a hundred horses, inextricably tangled, perished in the water.

Houston glanced over the prairie. A gray-clad column, marching with the swing of veterans, bore toward the scene of battle. After a long look the general lowered his field glass with a thankful sigh. Almonte and his four hundred were surrendering in a body.

As the sun of Austerlitz set, General Houston fainted in Hockley's arms. His right leg was shattered above the ankle. The other Texan casualties were six killed and twenty-four wounded. According to Texan figures the Mexicans lost 630 killed, 208 wounded, and 730 prisoners, making a total of 1,568 accounted for. This seems to be about two hundred more men than Santa Anna had with him.

The battle proper had lasted perhaps twenty minutes. The rest was in remembrance of the Alamo. This pursuit and slaughter continued into the night. The prisoners were herded in the center of a circle of bright fires. "Santa Anna? Santa Anna?" the Texans demanded until officers began to pull off their shoulder straps. But no Santa Anna was found.

After a night of pain General Houston propped himself against a tree; and Surgeon Ewing redressed his wound, which was more

serious than had been supposed. While the surgeon probed fragments of bone from the mangled flesh, the patient fashioned a garland of leaves and tastefully inscribed a card "To Miss Anna Raguet, Nacogdoches, Texas: These are laurels I send you from the battlefield of San Jacinto. Thine. HOUSTON."

The commander in chief also penciled a note which was borne as fast as horseflesh could take it to the hands of one who deserved his own share of the laurels — Andrew Jackson.

All day bands of scared prisoners were brought in. But no Santa Anna, no Cos. This was more than vexing. The Texans wished simply to kill Cos for violation of parole, but Santa Anna might escape to Filisola and return with thrice the army Houston had just defeated. With the President of Mexico in his hands, however, Houston could rest assured that he had won the war, not merely a battle.

Toward evening a patrol of five men rode into camp. Mounted behind Joel Robison was a bedraggled little figure in a blue cotton smock and red felt slippers. The patrol had found him near the ruined Vince's Bayou bridge seated on a stump, the living picture of dejection. He said he had found his ridiculous clothes in a deserted house. He looked hardly worth bothering to take five miles to camp and would have been dispatched on the spot but for Robison, who was a good-hearted boy, and spoke Spanish. Robison and his prisoner chatted on the ride. How many men did the Americans have? Robison said less than eight hundred, and the prisoner said that surely there were more than that. Robison asked the captive if he had left a family behind. "*Sí, señor.*" "Do you expect to see them again?" The little Mexican shrugged his shoulders. "Why did you come and fight us?" Robison wished to know. "A private soldier, *señor*, has little choice in such matters."

Robison had taken a liking to the polite little fellow and was about to turn him loose without ceremony among the herd of prisoners when the captives began to raise their hats.

"*El presidente! El presidente!*"

An officer of the guard ran up and, with an air that left the Texan flat, the prisoner asked to be conducted to General Houston.

Sam Houston was lying on a blanket under the oak tree, his eyes closed and his face drawn with pain. The little man was brought up by Hockley and Ben Fort Smith. He stepped forward and bowed gracefully.

"I am General Antonio López de Santa Anna, President of Mexico,

Commander in Chief of the Army of Operations. I place myself at the disposal of the brave General Houston."

This much-unexpected Spanish was almost too great a strain upon the pupil of Miss Anna Raguet. Raising himself on one elbow, Houston replied as words came to him.

"General Santa Anna! Ah, indeed! Take a seat, general. I am glad to see you. Take a seat!"

The host waved his arm toward a black box, and asked for an interpreter. Zavala<sup>1</sup> came up. Santa Anna recognized him.

"Oh! My friend, the son of my *early* friend!"

The young patrician bowed coldly. Santa Anna turned to General Houston.

"That man may consider himself born to no common destiny who has conquered Napoleon of the West; and it now remains for him to be generous to the vanquished."

"You should have remembered that at the Alamo," Houston replied.

General Santa Anna made a bland Latin answer that loses much in translation. Houston pressed the point. What excuse for the massacre of Fannin's men? Another Latin answer. Another blunt interrogation, and for the first time in his amazing life Santa Anna's power of self-command deserted him. He raised a nervous hand to his pale face and glanced behind him. A ring of savage Texans had pressed around, with ominous looks on their faces and ominous stains on their knives. Santa Anna murmured something about a passing indisposition and requested a piece of opium.

The drug restored the prisoner's poise, and formal negotiations were begun. Santa Anna was deft and shrewd; but Houston declined to discuss terms of peace, saying that was a governmental matter not within the province of a military commander. Santa Anna proposed an armistice, which Houston accepted, dictating the terms which provided for the immediate evacuation of Texas by the Mexican armies. Santa Anna wrote marching orders for Filisola and the other generals. Houston beckoned to Deaf Smith, and the orders were on their way.

Houston had Santa Anna's marquee erected within a few yards of the tree under which the Texas general lay, and restored the captive's

<sup>1</sup> **Zavala:** a Mexican, but a patriotic Texan and vice-president of the provisional government. His father had been a leader in the war that won Mexican independence from Spain; but he repudiated Santa Anna and fled to Texas, where he joined another struggle for independence.

personal baggage to him. Santa Anna retired to change his clothes, and General Houston produced an ear of corn from beneath his blanket and began to nibble it. A soldier picked up a kernel and said he was going to take it home and plant it. A genius had opened his lips!

Houston's great voice summoned the men from their cordial discussion of the mode of General Santa Anna's execution. "My brave fellows," he said, scattering corn by the handful, "take this along with you to your own fields, where I hope you may long cultivate the arts of peace as you have shown yourselves masters of the art of war."

Irresistible. "We'll call it Houston corn!" they shouted.

"Not Houston corn," their general said gravely, "but San Jacinto Corn!"

And thousands of tasseled Texas acres today boast pedigrees that trace back to the San Jacinto ear.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. James describes Houston to us with actions, not adjectives. Find incidents that show his bravery, his shrewdness, his kindness, his leadership, his gallantry.

2. Can you see why Houston's followers would be sometimes suspicious of his leadership, and sometimes enthusiastic?

3. Why was Santa Anna so confident of victory? What part did this overconfidence play in his defeat?

4. What purpose did Houston have in calling the council of war, "the first and last, but one, of his career"? Why did his purpose make the council ironic?

5. Notice how in the exciting narrative of the battle James uses verbs to make the happenings vivid. Pick out some sentences in which the verb gives the statement added spirit.

#### For Your Vocabulary

6. In this narrative are two expressive words dealing with high spirits. When James says that Houston was in a *buoyant* mood (page 384), he suggests a comparison with the buoys, or floating signals, that mark channels for mariners. Thanks to this suggestion of rising above heavier surroundings, the word is associated with hopefulness as well as light spirits. There is sly humor in the remark that Mrs. Mann's language is demanding the return of her oxen was *exhilarating* (page 385). For *exhilarating* means provoking merriment and is related to *hilarious* and *hilarity*, words that

deal with noisy good cheer. We often use *exhilarating* to mean creating high spirits, as when we call tennis and horseback riding *exhilarating* sports.

### *For Ambitious Students*

7. Investigate and discuss heroes and happenings in the past history of your own state, or others in which you are especially interested. A group of students might work up a map of the United States with the greatest local heroes of each state indicated by name or picture.

8. Incidents in Houston's life have been recently dramatized over the radio. Make up your own radio program to present effectively the incidents of this chapter or others in the life of Houston. Consider this as a possible project for the other persons represented in this section as you come to them. Such a method is particularly good for a small group of students to present to the rest of the class a more complete account of a person's life than is possible to get from a single chapter. These biographical programs are popular on the radio nowadays, and you can easily listen to examples to show you how to proceed.

### ROBERT E. LEE (1807-1870)

Few, if any, Americans deserve greater devotion and honor than Robert E. Lee. At the opening of the War between the States this great military genius was offered the command of the Federal forces; but, standing true to his family traditions and his high concept of honor and duty, he turned his back upon certain renown and allied his fortunes with those of his native Virginia. To know Lee is to understand the honesty of purpose, the gallant courage, the tragic despair, and the manly acceptance of unavoidable defeat that characterized the leaders of the Southern cause.

From the many accounts of the life of Lee, we have selected a chapter by his fellow Virginian, Thomas Nelson Page. Page, you will remember, was a writer of local-color stories, in which he pictured the romance of Old Virginia before the war days. He also won recognition as a novelist, in *Red Rock*, a portrayal of the terrible conditions of Reconstruction days. In *Robert E. Lee, Man and Soldier* Mr. Page expresses the same sympathetic understanding of Southern character that we find in his fiction. This biography is well worth reading in its entirety, both because it is an excellent portrait of a noble American and because it is written in the pleasing style of one of our eminent Southern authors.

## LEE IN DEFEAT

by THOMAS NELSON PAGE (1853-1922)

AND NOW, having endeavored to picture Lee during those glorious campaigns which must, to the future student of military skill, place him among the first captains of history, I shall not invite attention further to Lee the soldier — to Lee the strategist — to Lee the victorious, but to a greater Lee — to Lee the defeated.

As glorious as were these campaigns, it is on the last act of the drama — the retreat from Petersburg, the surrender at Appomattox, and the dark period that followed that surrender — that we must look to see him at his best. His every act, his every word, showed how completely he had surrendered himself to Duty, and with what implicit obedience he followed the command of that "stern daughter of the voice of God."

"Are you sanguine of the result of the war?" asked Bishop Wilmer of him in the closing days of the struggle. His reply was:

"At present I am not concerned with results. God's will ought to be our aim, and I am quite contented that His designs should be accomplished and not mine."

On that last morning when his handful of worn and starving veterans had made their last charge, to find themselves shut in by ranks of serried steel, hemmed in by Grant's entire army, he faced the decree of Fate with as much constancy as though that decree were success, not doom.

"What will history say of the surrender of an army in the field?" asked an officer of his staff in passionate grief.

"Yes, I know they will say hard things of us; they will not understand that we were overwhelmed by numbers; but that is not the question, colonel. The question is, is it right to surrender this army? If it is right, then I will take all of the responsibility."

It was ever the note of duty that he sounded.

"You will take with you," he said to his army in his farewell address, "the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed."

"We are conscious that we have humbly tried to do our duty," he said, a year or more after the war, when the clouds hung heavy over the South; "we may, therefore, with calm satisfaction trust in God and leave results to Him."

The sun which has shone in the morning, but has become obscured

by clouds in the afternoon, sometimes breaks forth and at its setting shines with a greater splendor than it knew even at high noon.

So here. Sheathing his stainless sword, surrendering in the field the remnant of an army that had once been the most redoubtable body of fighting men of the century, the greatest captain, the noblest gentleman of our time, expecting to slip into the darkness of oblivion, suddenly stepped forth from the gloom of defeat into the splendor of perpetual fame.

I love to think of Grant as he appeared that April day at Appomattox: the simple soldier, the strenuous fighter who, though thrashed, was always ready to fight again; who now, though he had achieved the prize for which he had fought so hard and had paid so dearly, was so modest and so unassuming that but for his shoulder straps and that yet better mark of rank, his generosity, he might not have been known as the victor. Southerners generally have long forgiven Grant all else for the magnanimity that he showed that day to Lee. By his orders no salutes of joy were fired, no public marks of exultation over his fallen foe were allowed. History contains no finer example of greatness. Not Alexander in his generous youth excelled him.

Yet, it is not more to the victor that Posterity will turn her gaze than to the vanquished, her admiration at the glory of the conqueror well-nigh lost in amazement at the dignity of the conquered.

Men who saw the defeated general when he came forth from the chamber where he had signed the articles of capitulation saw that he paused a moment as his eyes rested once more on the Virginia hills, smote his hands together as though in some excess of inward agony, then mounted his gray horse, Traveler, and rode calmly away.

If that was the very Gethsemane of his trials, yet he must have had then one moment of supreme, if chastened, joy. As he rode quietly down the lane leading from the scene of capitulation, he passed into view of his men — of such as remained of them. The news of the surrender had got abroad and they were waiting, grief-stricken and dejected, upon the hillsides, when they caught sight of their old commander on the gray horse. Then occurred one of the most notable scenes in the history of war. In an instant they were about him, bareheaded, with tear-wet faces; thronging him, kissing his hand, his boots, his saddle; weeping; cheering him amid their tears; shouting his name to the very skies. He said, "Men, we have fought through the war together. I have done my best for you. My heart is too full to say more."



The cheers were heard afar off over the hills where the victorious army lay encamped, and awakened some anxiety. It was a sound they well knew:

The voice once heard through Shiloh's woods,  
And Chickamauga's solitudes,  
The fierce South cheering on her sons.

It was reported in some of the Northern papers that it was the sound of jubilation at the surrender. But it was not. It was the voice of jubilation, yet not for surrender, but for the captain who had surrendered their muskets but was still the commander of their hearts.

This is Lee's final victory and the highest tribute to the South: that the devotion of the South to him was greater in the hour of defeat than in that of victory. It is said that Napoleon was adored by the men of France, but hated by the women. It was not so with Lee. No victor ever came home to receive more signal evidences of devotion than this defeated general.

Richmond was in mourning. Since the Union army had entered her gates, every house had been closed as though it were the house of death. One afternoon, a few days after the surrender, Lee, on his gray horse, Traveler, attended by two or three officers, crossed the James and rode quietly up the street to his home on Franklin Street, where he dismounted. That evening it was noised abroad that General Lee had arrived; he had been seen to enter his house. Next morning the houses were open as usual; life began to flow in its accustomed channels. Those who were there have said that when General Lee returned they felt as safe as if he had had his whole army at his back.

His first recorded words on his arrival were a tribute to his successful opponent. "General Grant has acted with magnanimity," he said to some who spoke of the victor with bitterness. It was the keynote to his afterlife.

Indeed, from this record a few facts stand forth beyond all others: Lee's nobility and genius; the fortitude of the Southern people; Grant's resolution and magnanimity; and the infinite valor of the American soldier.

Over forty years have gone by since that day in April when Lee, to avoid further useless sacrifice of life, surrendered himself and all that remained of the Army of Northern Virginia and gave his *parole d'honneur* to bear arms no more against the United States. To him, who with prescient mind had long borne in his bosom knowl-

edge of the exhausted resources of the Confederacy, and had seen his redoubtable army, under the "policy of attrition," dwindle away to a mere ghost of its former self, it might well appear that he had failed. and, if he ever thought of his personal reputation, that he had lost the soldier's dearest prize; that Fame had turned her back and Fate usurped her place. Thenceforth he who had been the leader of armies, whose glorious achievements had filled the world, who had been the prop of a highhearted nation's hope, was to walk the narrow byway of private life, defeated, impoverished, and possibly misunderstood.

But to us who have survived for the space of more than a generation, how different it appears. We know that Time, the redresser of wrongs, is steadily righting the act of unkind Fate; and Fame, firmly established in her high seat, is ever replacing a richer laurel on his brow.

Yea, ride away, thou defeated general! Ride through the broken fragments of thy shattered army, ride through thy war-wasted land, amid thy desolate and stricken people. But know that thou art riding on Fame's highest way:

This day shall see

Thy head wear sunlight and thy feet touch stars.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. To what extent is Lee accepted as a national hero today? What is remarkable about the presence of statues of Lee at Gettysburg and in the Capitol at Washington? What does this signify about the man Lee?

2. What does the incidental picture of Grant indicate of Page's attitude? Contrast the relations between victor and vanquished in this selection and in the preceding one about Houston. What basic reasons account for these differences?

3. What is your opinion of a "good loser"? What is more important than winning? Discuss these problems in relation to the athletic contests in your own school or town.

4. Vocabulary: strategist, sanguine, serried, magnanimity, posterity, capitulation, attrition, Gethsemane.

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

5. Some words that we meet but seldom must be valued for their full and exact meaning. Such a one is *prescient* (page 400), used by Page to describe Lee's mind. Literally the word means knowing what is ahead. It differs from *prophetic*, which implies spoken forecasts of what is to come,

and from *portentous* (which you will find in a poem) in that it describes a mental quality, while *portentous* describes events. Then, too, *portentous* is associated with vague signs of the future, while *prescient* comes from a stem meaning to know, the same stem that gives us the word *science* to distinguish man's proven knowledge. In *omniscient* the same stem is combined with a prefix meaning "all" to express "knowing everything." No ordinary mortal is *omniscient*, but many novelists write from the point of view of *omniscience*. How do their works differ from those in which you get the whole story from the point of view of one character?

### *For Ambitious Students*

6. To get a full picture of Lee's life, the easiest reading is *The Life of Robert E. Lee for Boys and Girls* by J. A. and M. C. Hamilton. Lee has been the subject of a biography by Woodrow Wilson and also by Gamaliel Bradford, both great scholars and, therefore, these books are to be read only by rather mature students. *Recollections and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* by his son, R. E. Lee, contains interesting bits which might be reported or read to the class.

7. John Drinkwater has written a drama *Robert E. Lee*. Parts of this might be dramatized informally before the class.

8. Further reading of Page's stories of the old South will vivify the period: *Marse Chan*, *In Ole Virginia*, *Red Rock*. Compare his romantic pictures with the more realistic ones of such modern books as *Gone with the Wind*.

### MARK TWAIN (1835-1910)

High above the Mississippi River at Hannibal, Missouri, stands a bronze statue of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, known to the world as Mark Twain. The face is looking out toward Turtle Island, which played an important part in his two great stories of boy life, *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. At the base of the statue is inscribed: "His religion was humanity, and the whole world mourned for him when he died" That was no empty tribute. He had first won favor by making people laugh; but in the end the name of Mark Twain came to stand for that genuine quality of looking facts squarely in the face, seeing through pretense, and being independent in thought that we look upon as the product of pioneer background. It has come to be a significant comparison to say that something is as American as Mark Twain.

Most of his books are autobiographical in nature. *Life on the Mississippi* shows his experience as a river pilot, as glamorous a position before the

War between the States as that of test pilot today. It also gives the origin of the pen name Mark Twain — one of the soundings to show the depth of the river (see page 1011). *Roughing It* is packed with the fun and frenzy of gold-rush days in California and Nevada, and it abounds in "yarns" — tall stories of incredible happenings told with due solemnity. The story that made him famous, "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," is perhaps our best example of frontier humor. When his newspaper sent him to Europe, his resulting book, *The Innocents Abroad*, shocked many by its hilarious irreverence for antiquities; but its real service, besides affording amusement, was to put to shame the insincere worship of everything European which many Americans evidenced in those days.

These are only a few of the many books which have endeared Mark Twain's name to people all over the world. During his later life he built up a great fortune from his writings and then lost it suddenly through unfortunate investments. With characteristic honesty he determined to pay his heavy debts by writing and lecturing, and these efforts of his old age brought added honors to him from all sides. His last major piece of writing was his *Autobiography*, which fills in the gaps left between the other books and gives new slants on his varicolored experiences. The following chapter from this book shows what happened to the boy Sam Clemens, which later blossomed into immortality through the lives of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

## BOYHOOD

MY PARENTS removed to Missouri in the early thirties; I do not remember just when, for I was not born then and cared nothing for such things. It was a long journey in those days, and must have been a rough and tiresome one. The home was made in the wee village of Florida, in Monroe County, and I was born there in 1835. The village contained a hundred people and I increased the population by one per cent. It is more than many of the best men in history could have done for a town. It may not be modest in me to refer to this but it is true. There is no record of a person doing as much — not even Shakespeare. But I did it for Florida, and it shows I could have done it for any place — even London, I suppose.

Recently someone in Missouri has sent me a picture of the house I was born in. Heretofore I have always stated that it was a palace, but I shall be more guarded now.

I used to remember my brother Henry walking into a fire outdoors when he was a week old. It was remarkable in me to remember a thing like that, and it was still more remarkable that I should cling to the delusion, for thirty years, that I *did* remember it — for

of course it never happened; he would not have been able to walk at that age. If I had stopped to reflect, I should not have burdened my memory with that impossible rubbish so long. It is believed by many people that an impression deposited in a child's memory within the first two years of its life cannot remain there five years, but that is an error. For many years I believed that I remembered helping my grandfather drink his whisky toddy when I was six weeks old, but I do not tell about that any more, now; I am grown old and my memory is not as active as it used to be. When I was younger I could remember anything, whether it had happened or not; but my faculties are decaying now, and soon I shall be so that I cannot remember any but the things that never happened. It is sad to go to pieces like this, but we all have to do it.

My uncle, John A. Quarles, was a farmer, and his place was in the country, four miles from Florida. He had eight children and fifteen or twenty Negroes, and was also fortunate in other ways, particularly in his character. I have not come across a better man than he was. I was his guest for two or three months every year, from the fourth year after we removed to Hannibal till I was eleven or twelve years old. I have never consciously used him or his wife in a book, but his farm has come very handy to me in literature once or twice. In *Huck Finn* and in *Tom Sawyer, Detective* I moved it down to Arkansas. It was all of six hundred miles, but it was no trouble; it was not a very large farm — five hundred acres, perhaps — but I could have done it if it had been twice as large. And as for the morality of it, I cared nothing for that; I would move a state if the exigencies of literature required it.

It was a heavenly place for a boy, that farm of my Uncle John's. The house was a double log one, with a spacious floor (roofed in) connecting it with the kitchen. In the summer the table was set in the middle of that shady and breezy floor, and the sumptuous meals — well, it makes me cry to think of them. Fried chicken, roast pig; wild and tame turkeys, duck, geese; venison just killed; squirrels, rabbits, pheasants, partridges, prairie chickens; biscuits, hot batter cakes, hot buckwheat cakes, hot "wheat bread," hot rolls, hot corn pone; fresh corn boiled on the ear, succotash, butter beans, string beans, tomatoes, peas, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes; buttermilk, sweet milk, "clabber"; watermelons, muskmelons, cantaloupes — all fresh from the garden; apple pie, peach pie, pumpkin pie, apple dumplings, peach cobbler — I can't remember the rest. The way that the things were cooked was perhaps the main splendor

— particularly a certain few of the dishes. For instance, the corn bread, the hot biscuits, and wheat bread, and the fried chicken. These things have never been properly cooked in the North — in fact, no one there is able to learn the art, so far as my experience goes. The North thinks it knows how to make corn bread, but this is mere superstition. Perhaps no bread in the world is quite so good as Southern corn bread, and perhaps no bread in the world is quite so bad as the Northern imitation of it. The North seldom tries to fry chicken, and this is well; the art cannot be learned north of the line of Mason and Dixon, nor anywhere in Europe.

[The author here goes into a long digression on European cooking.]

The farmhouse stood in the middle of a very large yard, and the yard was fenced on three sides with rails and on the rear side with high palings; against these stood the smokehouse; beyond the palings was the orchard; beyond the orchard were the Negro quarters and the tobacco fields. The front yard was entered over a stile made of sawed-off logs of graduated heights; I do not remember any gate. In a corner of the front yard were a dozen lofty hickory trees and a dozen black walnuts, and in the nutting season riches were to be gathered there.

Down a piece, abreast the house, stood a little log cabin against the rail fence; and there the woody hill fell sharply away past the barns, the corncrib, the stables, and the tobacco-curing house, to a limpid brook which sang along over its gravelly bed and curved and frisked in and out and here and there and yonder in the deep shade of overhanging foliage and vines — a divine place for wading, and it had swimming pools, too, which were forbidden to us and therefore much frequented by us. For we were little Christian children and had early been taught the value of forbidden fruit.

All the Negroes were friends of ours, and with those of our own age we were in effect comrades. I say in effect, using the phrase as a modification. We were comrades, and yet not comrades; color and condition interposed a subtle line which both parties were conscious of and which rendered complete fusion impossible. We had a faithful and affectionate good friend, ally, and adviser in "Uncle Dan'l," a middle-aged slave whose head was the best one in the Negro quarter, whose sympathies were wide and warm, and whose heart was honest and simple and knew no guile. He has served me well these many, many years. I have not seen him for more than half a century,

and yet spiritually I have had his welcome company a good part of that time, and have staged him in books under his own name and as "Jim," and carted him all around — to Hannibal, down the Mississippi on a raft, and even across the Desert of Sahara in a balloon — and he has endured it all with the patience and friendliness and loyalty which were his birthright. It was on the farm that I got my strong liking for his race and my appreciation of certain of its fine qualities. This feeling and this estimate have stood the test of sixty years and more, and have suffered no impairment. The black face is as welcome to me now as it was then.

In my schoolboy days I had no aversion to slavery. I was not aware that there was anything wrong about it. No one arraigned it in my hearing; the local papers said nothing against it; the local pulpit taught us that God approved it, that it was a holy thing, and that the doubter need only to look in the Bible if he wished to settle his mind — and then the texts were read aloud to us to make the matter sure; if the slaves themselves had an aversion to slavery, they were wise and said nothing. In Hannibal we seldom saw a slave misused; on the farm, never.

There was, however, one small incident of my boyhood days which touched this matter, and it must have meant a good deal to me or it would not have stayed in my memory, clear and sharp, vivid and shadowless, all these slow-drifting years. We had a little slave boy whom we had hired from someone, there in Hannibal. He was from the eastern shore of Maryland, and had been brought away from his family and his friends, halfway across the American continent, and sold. He was a cheery spirit, innocent and gentle, and the noisiest creature that ever was, perhaps. All day long he was singing, whistling, yelling, whooping, laughing — it was maddening, devastating, unendurable. At last, one day, I lost all my temper, and went raging to my mother and said Sandy had been singing for an hour without a single break, and I couldn't stand it, and *wouldn't* she please shut him up. The tears came into her eyes and her lips trembled, and she said something like this:

"Poor thing, when he sings it shows that he is not remembering, and that comforts me; but when he is still I am afraid he is thinking, and I cannot bear it. He will never see his mother again; if he can sing, I must not hinder it, but be thankful for it. If you were older, you would understand me; then that friendless child's noise would make you glad."

It was a simple speech and made up of small words, but it went

home, and Sandy's noise was not a trouble to me any more. She never used large words, but she had a natural gift for making small ones do effective work. She lived to reach the neighborhood of ninety years and was capable with her tongue to the last — especially when a meanness or an injustice roused her spirit. She has come handy to me several times in my books, where she figures as Tom Sawyer's Aunt Polly. I fitted her out with a dialect and tried to think up other improvements for her, but did not find any. I used Sandy once, also; it was in *Tom Sawyer*. I tried to get him to whitewash the fence, but it did not work. I do not remember what name I called him by in the book.

I can see the farm yet, with perfect clearness. I can see all its belongings, all its details; the family room of the house, with a "trundle" bed in one corner and a spinning wheel in another — a wheel whose rising and falling wail, heard from a distance, was the mournfullest of all sounds to me, and made me homesick and low-spirited, and filled my atmosphere with the wandering spirits of the dead; the vast fireplace, piled high, on winter nights, with flaming hickory logs from whose ends a sugary sap bubbled out, but did not go to waste, for we scraped it off and ate it; the lazy cat spread out on the rough hearthstones; the drowsy dogs braced against the jambs and blinking; my aunt in one chimney corner, knitting; my uncle in the other, smoking his corncob pipe; the slick and carpetless oak floor faintly mirroring the dancing flame tongues and freckled with black indentations where fire coals had popped out and died a leisurely death; half a dozen children romping in the background twilight; "split"-bottomed chairs here and there, some with rockers; a cradle — out of service, but waiting, with confidence; in the early cold mornings a snuggle of children, in shirts and chemises, occupying the hearthstone and procrastinating — they could not bear to leave that comfortable place and go out on the wind-swept floor space between the house and kitchen where the general tin basin stood, and wash.

Along outside of the front fence ran the country road, dusty in the summertime, and a good place for snakes — they liked to lie in it and sun themselves; when they were rattlesnakes or puff adders, we killed them; when they were black snakes, or racers, or belonged to the fabled "hoop" breed, we fled, without shame; when they were "house snakes," or "garters," we carried them home and put them in Aunt Patsy's workbasket for a surprise; for she was prejudiced against snakes, and always when she took the basket in her lap and they began to climb out of it it disordered her mind. She



never could seem to get used to them; her opportunities went for nothing. And she was always cold toward bats, too, and could not bear them; and yet I think a bat is as friendly a bird as there is. My mother was Aunt Patsy's sister and had the same wild superstitions. A bat is beautifully soft and silky; I do not know any creature that is pleasanter to the touch or is more grateful for caressings, if offered in the right spirit. I know all about these coleoptera,<sup>1</sup> because our great cave, three miles below Hannibal, was multitudinously stocked with them, and often I brought them home to amuse my mother with. It was easy to manage if it was a school day, because then I had ostensibly been to school and hadn't any bats. She was not a suspicious person, but full of trust and confidence; and when I said, "There's something in my coat pocket for you," she would put her hand in. But she always took it out again, herself; I didn't have to tell her. It was remarkable the way she couldn't learn to like private bats. The more experience she had, the more she could not change her views.

I think she was never in the cave in her life; but everybody else went there. Many excursion parties came from considerable distances up and down the river to visit the cave. It was miles in extent and was a tangled wilderness of narrow and lofty clefts and passages. It was an easy place to get lost in; anybody could do it — including the bats. I got lost in it myself, along with a lady, and our last candle burned down to almost nothing before we glimpsed the search party's lights winding about in the distance.

"Injun Joe," the half-breed, got lost in there once, and would have starved to death if the bats had run short. But there was no chance of that; there were myriads of them. He told me all his story. In the book called *Tom Sawyer* I starved him entirely to death in the cave, but that was in the interest of art; it never happened. "General" Gaines, who was our first town drunkard before Jimmy Finn got the place, was lost in there for the space of a week, and finally pushed his handkerchief out of a hole in a hilltop near Saverton, several miles down the river from the cave's mouth, and somebody saw it and dug him out. There is nothing the matter with his statistics except the handkerchief. I knew him for years and he hadn't any. But it could have been his nose. That would attract attention.

The cave was an uncanny place, for it contained a corpse — the corpse of a young girl of fourteen. It was in a glass cylinder in-

<sup>1</sup> coleoptera: beetles. The inaccurate scientific term is used humorously.

closed in a copper one which was suspended from a rail which bridged a narrow passage. The body was preserved in alcohol, and it was said that loafers and rowdies used to drag it up by the hair and look at the dead face. The girl was the daughter of a St. Louis surgeon of extraordinary ability and wide celebrity. He was an eccentric man and did many strange things. He put the poor thing in that forlorn place himself.

Beyond the road where the snakes sunned themselves was a dense young thicket, and through it a dim-lighted path led a quarter of a mile; then out of the dimness one emerged abruptly upon a level great prairie which was covered with wild strawberry plants, vividly starred with prairie pinks, and walled in on all sides by forests. The strawberries were fragrant and fine, and in the season we were generally there in the crisp freshness of the early morning, while the dew beads still sparkled upon the grass and the woods were ringing with the first songs of the birds.

Down the forest slopes to the left were the swings. They were made of bark stripped from hickory saplings. When they became dry they were dangerous. They usually broke when a child was forty feet in the air, and this was why so many bones had to be mended every year. I had no ill luck myself, but none of my cousins escaped. There were eight of them, and at one time and another they broke fourteen arms among them. But it cost next to nothing, for the doctor worked by the year — twenty-five dollars for the whole family. I remember two of the Florida doctors, Chowning and Meredith. They not only tended an entire family for twenty-five dollars a year, but furnished the medicines themselves. Good measure, too. Only the largest persons could hold a whole dose. Castor oil was the principal beverage. The dose was half a dipperful, with half a dipperful of New Orleans molasses added to help it down and make it taste good, which it never did.

I was always told that I was a sickly and precarious and tiresome and uncertain child, and lived mainly on allopathic medicines during the first seven years of my life. I asked my mother about this, in her old age — she was in her eighty-eighth year — and said:

“ I suppose that during all that time you were uneasy about me? ”

“ Yes, the whole time.”

“ Afraid I wouldn't live? ”

After a reflective pause — ostensibly to think out the facts — “ No — afraid you would.”

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Give a brief picture of the kind of surroundings Samuel Clemens had in his boyhood. What kind of mother did he have? Point out how this environment is reflected in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* or others of his writings.
2. Select some good examples of the author's sudden humor. Is he sentimental about the past? conceited? frank? Prove your answers.
3. If you have seen the moving pictures of *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* discuss them as to interest and character portrayal. How closely did they follow the original stories?
4. Vocabulary: exigencies, arraigned, procrastinating, ostensibly (see page 25), eccentric, precarious, allopathic.

*For Your Vocabulary*

5. The children ready for bed but *procrastinating* (page 407) were indulging in a common activity, putting things off. Hence the old saying: "Procrastination is the thief of time." The stem of these words means "tomorrow." From the stem *tempus* (time) we get the word *temporize*, meaning to play for time deliberately rather than in the aimless way of the *procrastinator*.

*For Ambitious Students*

6. Write an account of some place where you lived as a child, now seen only through recollection. If this is not possible, write of some incident or circumstance of your childhood.

7. To follow still further the interesting connections between Clemens's own boyhood and the incidents and characters of his "boy" books, read and report to the class the chapter in A. B. Paine's *Life of Mark Twain* called "Tom Sawyer's Gang."

8. A condensed version of Paine's biography called *The Boy's Life of Mark Twain* is especially recommended to give you the full picture of his life. And, of course, the rest of the *Autobiography* is excellent. You can also see how he appeared through the eyes of his daughter in Clara Clemens Gabrilowitsch's *My Father, Mark Twain*; of his best literary friend in William Dean Howells's *My Mark Twain*; of a present-day humorist in Stephen Leacock's *Mark Twain*.

9. If you want to read more of Mark Twain's own writings, choose first from those mentioned in the introduction to this selection. Others with a foreign setting are *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (there have been three moving-picture versions of this story); *A Tramp Abroad*; and the author's own favorite, *Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, a fine biography.

## HAMLIN GARLAND (1860-1940)

The winning of the West was not all covered wagons, buffalo hunts, and Indian raids. It included also years of hard, monotonous labor as the "homesteader" turned the virgin prairie into grainfields and fenced-in pastures. The literary historian of the pioneer farmer of the Middle West is Hamlin Garland. Mr. Garland began writing realistic stories of local color back in the nineties. In 1917 he published *A Son of the Middle Border*, the greatest of his series of autobiographical books. It is an epic portrayal of pioneer life on the farms of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Dakota. It is a beautifully written book, Mr. Garland having revised many of its passages more than twenty times.

*A Daughter of the Middle Border* refers to his mother, who figures prominently in the book, although the narrative of the volume concerns his own return to the Middle West with his Eastern wife and the experiences of his married life. *Back-Trailers of the Middle Border* continues the story into his later life. Before Garland's day those who wrote about farm life usually saw the country through the romantic haze of the city dweller and summer visitor. With the publication of *Main-Traveled Roads* (1890), his first volume of short stories, the voice of an actual farmer was heard in literature, and the story he told had the genuine touch of firsthand experience. He had no illusions about the farm. *A Son of the Middle Border* is, therefore, not only a well-written autobiography, but also a significant document in the history of our national life as well as literature.

## SCHOOL LIFE

Though the chapter here presented is called "School Life" its accounts of well-digging, threshing, prairie fires, and blizzards give varied aspects of the pioneering which is the core of *A Son of the Middle Border*. The description of the school life itself, with its rich detail of recess games, McGuffey's readers, feet itching from chilblains, and frozen lunches, illustrates the painstaking and vivid realism found throughout the entire book.

OUR NEW house was completed during July but we did not move into it till in September. There was much to be done in way of building sheds, granaries, and corncribs and in this work father was both carpenter and stonemason. An amusing incident comes to my mind in connection with the digging of our well.

Uncle David and I were "tending mason," and father was down in the well laying or trying to lay the curbing. It was a tedious and

difficult job and he was about to give it up in despair when one of our neighbors, a quaint old Englishman named Barker, came driving along. He was one of these men who take a minute inquisitive interest in the affairs of others; therefore he pulled his team to a halt and came in.

Peering into the well, he drawled out, "Hello, Garland. W'at ye doin' down there?"

"Tryin' to lay a curb," replied my father, lifting a gloomy face, "and I guess it's too complicated for me."

"Nothin' easier," retorted the old man with a wink at my uncle, "jest put two atop o' one and one atop o' two — and the big end out" — and with a broad grin on his red face he went back to his team and drove away.

My father afterward said, "I saw the whole process in a flash of light. He had given me all the rule I needed. I laid the rest of that wall without a particle of trouble."

Many times after this Barker stopped to offer advice, but he never quite equaled the startling success of his rule for masonry.

The events of this harvest, even the process of moving into the new house, are obscured in my mind by the clouds of smoke which rose from calamitous fires all over the West. It was an unprecedentedly dry season, so that not merely the prairie but many weedy cornfields burned. I had a good deal of time to meditate upon this, for I was again the plowboy. Every day I drove away from the rented farm to the new land where I was crosscutting the breaking, and the thickening haze through which the sun shone with a hellish red glare produced in me a growing uneasiness which became terror when the news came to us that Chicago was on fire. It seemed to me then that the earth was about to go up in a flaming cloud just as my granddad had so often prophesied.

This general sense of impending disaster was made keenly personal by the destruction of Uncle David's stable with all his horses. This building like most of the barns of the region was not only roofed with straw but banked with straw, and it burned so swiftly that David was trapped in a stall while trying to save one of his teams. He saved himself by burrowing like a gigantic mole through the side of the shed, and so, hatless, covered with dust and chaff, emerged as if from a fiery burial after he had been given up for dead.

This incident combined with others so filled my childish mind that I lived in apprehension of similar disaster. I feared the hot wind which roared up from the south, and I never entered our own stable

in the middle of the day without a sense of danger. Then came the rains — the blessed rains — and put an end to my fears.

In a week we had forgotten all the “conflagrations” except that in Chicago. There was something grandiose and unforgettable in the tales which told of the madly fleeing crowds in the narrow streets. These accounts pushed back the walls of my universe till its far edge included the ruined metropolis whose rebuilding was of the highest importance to us, for it was not only the source of all our supplies, but the great central market to which we sent our corn and hogs and wheat.

My world was splendidly romantic. It was bounded on the west by THE PLAINS with their Indians and buffalo; on the north by THE GREAT WOODS, filled with thieves and counterfeiters; on the south by OSAGE<sup>1</sup> and CHICAGO; and on the east by HESPER, ONALASKA,<sup>2</sup> and BOSTON. A luminous trail ran from Dry Run Prairie to Neshonoc — all else was “chaos and black night.”

For seventy days I walked behind my plow on the new farm while my father finished the harvest on the rented farm and moved to the house on the knoll. It was lonely work for a boy of eleven but there were frequent breaks in the monotony and I did not greatly suffer. I disliked crosscutting for the reason that the unrotted sods would often pile up in front of the colter and make me a great deal of trouble. There is a certain pathos in the sight of that small boy tugging and kicking at the stubborn turf in the effort to free his plow. Such misfortunes loom large in a lad's horizon.

One of the interludes, and a lovely one, was given over to gathering the hay from one of the wild meadows to the north of us. Another was the threshing from the shock on the rented farm. This was the first time we had seen this done and it interested us keenly. A great many teams were necessary and the crew of men was correspondingly large. Uncle David was again the thresher with a fine new separator; and I would have enjoyed the season with almost perfect contentment had it not been for the fact that I was detailed to hold sacks for Daddy Fairbanks, who was the measurer.

Our first winter had been without much wind but our second taught us the meaning of the word “blizzard,” which we had just begun to hear about. The winds of Wisconsin were “gentle zephyrs” compared to the blasts which now swept down over the plain to hammer

<sup>1</sup> Osage: a small town in northeastern Iowa, near which the Garland farm was located. <sup>2</sup> Hesper, Onalaska: small towns in western Wisconsin, near which the Garlands had previously lived.

upon our desolate little cabin and pile the drifts around our sheds and granaries, and even my pioneer father was forced to admit that the hills of Green's Coulee had their uses after all.

One such storm which leaped upon us at the close of a warm and beautiful day in February lasted for two days and three nights, making life on the open prairie impossible even to the strongest man. The thermometer fell to thirty degrees below zero and the snow-laden air moving at a rate of eighty miles an hour pressed upon the walls of our house with giant power. The sky of noon was darkened, so that we moved in a pallid half-light, and the windows thick with frost shut us in as if with gray shrouds.

Hour after hour those winds and snows in furious battle howled and roared and whistled around our frail shelter, slashing at the windows and piping on the chimney, till it seemed as if the Lord Sun had been wholly blotted out and that the world would never again be warm. Twice each day my father made a desperate sally toward the stable to feed the imprisoned cows and horses or to replenish our fuel — for the remainder of the long pallid day he sat beside the fire with gloomy face. Even his indomitable spirit was awed by the fury of that storm.

So long and so continuously did those immitigable winds howl in our ears that their tumult persisted, in imagination, when on the third morning we thawed holes in the thickened rime of the windowpanes and looked forth on a world silent as a marble sea and flaming with sunlight. My own relief was mingled with surprise — surprise to find the landscape so unchanged. True, the yard was piled high with drifts and the barns were almost lost to view but the far fields and the dark lines of Burr Oak Grove remained unchanged.

We met our schoolmates that day, like survivors of shipwreck, and for many days we listened to gruesome stories of disaster, tales of stages frozen deep in snow with all their passengers sitting in their seats, and of herders with their silent flocks around them, lying stark as granite among the hazel bushes in which they had sought shelter. It was long before we shook off the awe with which this tempest filled our hearts.

The schoolhouse, which stood at the corner of our new farm, was less than half a mile away, and yet on many of the winter days which followed we found it quite far enough. Hattie was now thirteen, Frank nine, and I a little past eleven; but nothing, except a blizzard such as I have described, could keep us away from school. Facing the cutting wind, wallowing through the drifts, battling like small

intrepid animals, we often arrived at the door moaning with pain yet unsubdued, our ears frosted, our toes numb in our boots, to meet others in similar case around the roaring hot stove.

Often after we reached the schoolhouse another form of suffering overtook us in the "thawing out" process. Our fingers and toes, swollen with blood, ached and itched, and our ears burned. Nearly all of us carried sloughing ears and scaling noses. Some of the pupils came two miles against these winds.

The natural result of all this exposure was, of course, chilblains! Every foot in the school was more or less touched with this disease, to which our elders alluded as if it were an amusing trifle; but to us it was no joke.

After getting thoroughly warmed up, along about the middle of the forenoon, there came into our feet a most intense itching and burning and aching, a sensation so acute that keeping still was impossible, and all over the room an uneasy shuffling and drumming arose as we pounded our throbbing heels against the floor or scraped our itching toes against the edge of our benches. The teacher understood and was kind enough to overlook this disorder.

The wonder is that any of us lived through that winter, for at recess, no matter what the weather might be, we flung ourselves out of doors to play "fox and geese" or "dare goal," until, damp with perspiration, we responded to the teacher's bell, and came pouring back into the entryways to lay aside our wraps for another hour's study.

Our readers were almost the only counterchecks to the current of vulgarity and baseness which ran through the talk of the older boys, and I wish to acknowledge my deep obligation to Professor McGuffey, whoever he may have been, for the dignity and literary grace of his selections. From the pages of his readers I learned to know and love the poems of Scott, Byron, Southey, Wordsworth, and a long line of the English masters. I got my first taste of Shakespeare from the selected scenes which I read in these books.

With terror as well as delight I rose to read "Lochiel's Warning," "The Battle of Waterloo" or "The Roman Captive." Marco Bozaris and William Tell were alike glorious to me. I soon knew not only my own reader, the fourth, but all the selections in the fifth and sixth as well. I could follow almost word for word the recitations of the older pupils and at such times I forgot my squat little body and my mop of hair, and became imaginatively a page in the train of Ivanhoe, or a bowman in the army of Richard the Lion Heart battling the Saracen in the Holy Land.



With a high ideal of the way in which these grand selections should be read, I was scared almost voiceless when it came my turn to read them before the class. "STRIKE FOR YOUR ALTARS AND YOUR FIRES. STRIKE FOR THE GREEN GRAVES OF YOUR SIREN — GOD AND YOUR NATIVE LAND," always reduced me to a trembling breathlessness. The sight of the emphatic print was a call to the best that was in me and yet I could not meet the test. Excess of desire to do it just right often brought a ludicrous gasp and I often fell back into my seat in disgrace, the titter of the girls adding to my pain.

Then there was the famous passage, "Did ye not hear it?" and the careless answer, "No, it was but the wind or the car rattling o'er the stony street." I knew exactly how those opposing emotions should be expressed but to do it after I rose to my feet was impossible. Burton was even more terrified than I. Stricken blind as well as dumb, he usually ended by helplessly staring at the words which, I conceive, had suddenly become a blur to him.

No matter, we were taught to feel the force of these poems and to reverence the genius that produced them, and that was worth while. Falstaff and Prince Hal, Henry and his wooing of Kate, Wolsey and his downfall, Shylock and his pound of flesh all became a part of our thinking and helped us to measure the large figures of our own literature, for Whittier, Bryant, and Longfellow also had place in these volumes. It is probable that Professor McGuffey, being a Southern man, did not value New England writers as highly as my grandmother did; nevertheless "Thanatopsis" was there and "The Village Blacksmith," and extracts from *The Deerslayer* and *The Pilot* gave us a notion that in Cooper we had a novelist of weight and importance, one to put beside Scott and Dickens.

A by-product of my acquaintance with one of the older boys was a stack of copies of the *New York Weekly*, a paper filled with stories of noble life in England and hairbreadth escapes on the plain, a shrewd mixture, designed to meet the needs of the entire membership of a prairie household. The pleasure I took in these tales should fill me with shame, but it doesn't — I rejoice in the memory of it.

I soon began, also, to purchase and trade "Beadle's Dime Novels" and, to tell the truth, I took an exquisite delight in *Old Sleuth* and *Jack Harkaway*. My taste was catholic. I ranged from *Lady Gwen-dolin* to *Buckskin Bill*, and so far as I can now distinguish, one was quite as enthralling as the other. It is impossible for any print to be as magical to any boy these days as those weeklies were to me in 1871.

One day a singular test was made of us all. Through some agency now lost to me my father was brought to subscribe for the *Hearth and Home* or some such paper for the farmer, and in this I read my first chronicle of everyday life.

In the midst of my dreams of lords and ladies, queens and dukes, I found myself deeply concerned with backwoods farming, spelling schools, protracted meetings, and the like familiar homely scenes. This serial (which involved my sister and myself in many a spat as to who should read it first) was *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, by Edward Eggleston, and a perfectly successful attempt to interest Western readers in a story of the middle border.

To us Mandy and Bud Means, Ralph Hartsook, the teacher, Little Shocky, and sweet patient Hannah, were as real as Cyrus Button and Daddy Fairbanks. We could hardly wait for the next number of the paper, so concerned were we about Hannah and Ralph. We quoted old lady Means and we made bets on Bud in his fight with the villainous drover. I hardly knew where Indiana was in those days, but Eggleston's characters were near neighbors.

The illustrations were dreadful, even in my eyes; but the artist contrived to give a slight virginal charm to Hannah and a certain childish sweetness to Shocky, so that we accepted the more than mortal ugliness of old man Means and his daughter Mirandy (who simpered over her book at us as she did at Ralph) as a just interpretation of their worthlessness.

This book is a milestone in my literary progress, as it is in the development of distinctive Western fiction; and years afterward I was glad to say so to the aged author, who lived a long and honored life as a teacher and writer of fiction.

It was always too hot or too cold in our schoolroom and on certain days when a savage wind beat and clamored at the loose windows, the girls, humped and shivering, sat upon their feet to keep them warm, and the younger children with shawls over their shoulders sought permission to gather close about the stove.

Our dinner pails (stored in the entryway) were often frozen solid and it was necessary to thaw out our mince pie as well as our bread and butter by putting it on the stove. I recall, vividly, gnawing, dog-like, at the mollified outside of a doughnut while still its frosty heart made my teeth ache.

Happily all days were not like this. There were afternoons when the sun streamed warmly into the room, when long icicles formed on

the eaves, adding a touch of grace to the desolate building, moments when the jingling bells of passing wood sleighs expressed the natural cheer and buoyancy of our youthful hearts.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Point out marked contrasts between your own life and that of Hamlin Garland. What experiences have you had that are in any way similar to his? Do you think the many hardships these boys and girls had to undergo to get an education were a help or a hindrance to them? Why?
2. Try to demonstrate Barker's rule for masonry, using books or other objects for stones.
3. Wherein lies the humor of the boy Hamlin's world? What are the boundaries of your "world"?
4. Do you think your literary taste is "catholic"? Can you name any "milestones" in your "literary progress"?
5. Vocabulary: grandiose, interludes, sloughing, Saracen, mollified.

### For Your Vocabulary

6. Life on the Middle Border, where Garland grew up, developed strength of spirit as well as of body. He calls his father's spirit *indomitable* (page 414), which means incapable of being mastered by outside forces. You probably know the related words *dominant*, ruling or controlling, and the verb *dominate*. All three come from *dominus*, a Latin word for lord or master. The children early developed the same strong spirit, for they battled the storm "like small *intrepid* animals." *Intrepid* (page 415) means without fear, literally without trembling from fear. *Trepidation* is a state of fear or alarm that sets one to trembling.

### For Ambitious Students

7. Describe some spectacular fire or storm that you have seen, either orally to the class or in writing as if it were a chapter in your autobiography.
8. A special report on the great Chicago fire of 1871 would be interesting. The moving picture *In Old Chicago* centered about this event.
9. Two good accounts of Midwestern blizzards in literature are Frances Gilchrist Wood's short story "Turkey Red" and Chapter IV in Part II of Rølvaag's *Giants in the Earth*. Whittier's "Snowbound" is the classic of the New England storm. Passages from these might be read aloud to the class — especially if you live in the South, where such storms are outside your experience.

10. If you read all of *A Son of the Middle Border* and would like to know more of this interesting family, read *A Daughter of the Middle Border* (about Hamlin's mother) and *Back-Trailers of the Middle Border* (contrasting life in the East and the West). Garland's stories in *Main-Traveled Roads* picture hard farm conditions of the early days. As a result of reading Garland's books, you might like to write on "Farm Life Then and Now."

## LINCOLN STEFFENS (1866-1936)

During the first decade of this century everyone was reading Lincoln Steffens's exposures of political corruption, which appeared first in *McClure's Magazine* and later in book form. These set the style for a great period of "muckraking." But when a history professor addressed Steffens as the first of the "muckrakers," he replied that the prophets of the Old Testament were ahead of him, and pointed out that President Theodore Roosevelt had taken the term from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. The details of these exposures are matters of the past, but the experiences of a man who has probed into the substrata of political and economic intrigue are of permanent interest. When Lincoln Steffens's *Autobiography* appeared in 1931, it captured the fancy of the public at once and was hailed as one of the great American autobiographies. The author's long journalistic experience enabled him to write with an easy yet exciting style. It is the kind of book that is as fascinating as a novel, and at the same time opens up innumerable problems of our modern life. The frankness of treatment which made his early articles breath-taking is characteristic of this book also, whether he is discussing himself or others. One chapter is characteristically called "Muckraking Myself — a Little."

Born into a well-to-do family of San Francisco, Steffens in his early life was typical of the young American with money and family protection behind him. But the following chapter shows him suddenly thrown upon his own resources at the end of an expensive education. In some measure Steffens's problem is that of a large proportion of American youth today: "After college — what?"

### I BECOME A REPORTER

WHEN MY ship sailed into New York harbor, my father's agent brought down to quarantine a letter which I still remember, word-perfect, I think.

My dear son: When you finished school you wanted to go to college. I sent you to Berkeley When you got through there, you did not care to go

into my business; so I sold out. You preferred to continue your studies in Berlin. I let you. After Berlin it was Heidelberg; after that Leipzig. And after the German university you wanted to study at the French universities in Paris. I consented, and after a year with the French, you had to have half a year of the British Museum in London. All right. You had that too.

By now you must know about all there is to know of the theory of life, but there's a practical side as well. It's worth knowing. I suggest that you learn it, and the way to study it, I think, is to stay in New York and hustle.

Enclosed please find one hundred dollars, which should keep you till you can find a job and support yourself.

This letter made me feel as if the ship were sinking under me; I had to swim. I did not know how, not in those waters, but it was not fear that hit me so hard. Nor disappointment. I had no plans to be disturbed. My vague idea was to go home to California and "see" what chance there was, say, at some college, to teach or lecture on the theories of ethics while making a study of morals: the professional ethics and the actual conduct of men in business, politics, and the professions. I could get no academic position in the East, where I was not known, but I might carry on my research as an insider in business just as well as I could as an observer. My wife<sup>1</sup> asked me how I was going to go about getting a job in business and how meanwhile we were to live. For the first time, I think, I realized that I was expected to support my wife and that meanwhile my wife expected my father to help us. And my father would have done it. He said afterward that if he had known that I was married, he would not have thrown me off as he did — for my good, "just to see what you could do for yourself," he said. My wife was for telling him then and there, but I could not. I declared that I would never ask my father for another cent, and I didn't. The next money transaction between us was a loan I made to him.

No, my father was putting me to a test, I said, and I would show him. And my mother-in-law, Mrs. Bontecou, backed me up. She said she would see us through with her little money. Josephine was angry, and, in brief, ours was a gloomy landing party. I alone was cheerful, secretly; I had an idea. I would write.

At the small hotel Josephine knew, I took pencil and paper and I wrote a short story, "Sweet Punch." That was a Saturday. I did it that day and rewrote and finished it on Sunday. Louis Loeb called

<sup>1</sup> My wife: In Paris Steffens had married a young American girl, Josephine Bontecou, who was traveling abroad with her mother. He had not told his family in California of this marriage.

that night. He was illustrating for *Harper's Magazine*, and he said he would offer them my story the next day. He sold it to them for fifty dollars. I sat me down to calculate. That story was done and sold in three days. Call it a week. I could make fifty dollars a week, which multiplied by fifty-two was, say, twenty-five hundred dollars a year. Enough to live on. But I didn't do another story that week nor the next. Too busy looking for a job, I excused; but the fact was that I couldn't do another for a month, and then the second story was rejected. It was years before I got into the magazines again.

It was weeks before I found a job. I was amazed at the difficulty. There I was, all dressed up in my beautiful morning coat with top hat, answering ads, any ads for anything, from an editorship to errand boy. Literally. The juvenile literature I had read as a boy, about lads who began at the bottom and worked up, had stuck. Here I was, what I had once grieved that I was not, a poor but willing young fellow, without parents, friends, or money, seeking a start in life, just a foothold on the first rung of the ladder; I would, like my boy heroes, attend to the rest. And I couldn't get the chance! I couldn't understand it.

The most urgent ads came from the water front, and I would go into one of those shabby little dirty, dark shops, where they dealt in ship furnishings or produce — dressed like a dude, remember; especially careful to be in my best to make a good first impression — and showing the clipping from the paper, ask for an opening. The shopkeeper would throw himself back in his chair and stare at me and sputter, "But — but do you think you can do the work? It's hard work and — and — are you — qualified? What has been your experience?" And I answered that I had studied at Berkeley, Berlin, Heidelberg, the Sorbonne! And for some reason that seemed to end it.

Those were the days when businessmen were prejudiced against a college education. My father's partners had the prejudice. They warned him that his course with me would ruin me, and I think that it was they who advised him to drop me in New York and see who was right, he or they. Businessmen have learned since that college does not unfit average young men for anything but an intellectual career; they take them on and will tell you that the colleges are the best source in the world for cheap labor. But in my day, next to my clothes and general beautifulness, the heaviest handicap I had was my claim to a college education, and not only one college, but — five. Some employers dropped their hands and jaw and stared me silently

out of their sight; others pushed me out, and others again — two I remember vividly — called in all hands to “see this college graduate that wants to clean the windows and run errands.”

My father was right. As I went home to my wife and mother-in-law to describe life as I found it and businessmen as they found me, I had to confess that I was learning something, that life wasn't what I had expected from my reading. My money was all gone, all the one hundred and also the fifty dollars, and I was paying for myself alone. Mrs. Bontecou paid for her daughter, and soon she was paying for her son-in-law too. I became desperate. My father had given me a letter from the supervising editor of all the Southern Pacific Railroad publications, the monthly magazines, weeklies, and daily newspapers that “the Road” owned or subsidized, to an editor of the *Century Magazine*. I had not used it, because I preferred not to apply “pull.” I was for getting my start in life on merit alone. Mrs. Bontecou was with me on that; Josephine was impatient and practical. She pressed me to deliver the letter of introduction, and I did. I asked Mr. Robert Underwood Johnson to give me an editorial position on the *Century*.

He read the letter, pondered, asked me questions, and sized me up. Seeing through my clothes and my story, I guess, he very cautiously asked me if I would be willing to start — just for the practice — to begin my editorial career as — a — reporter. Would I? I certainly would; I would have laid off my top hat to be a copy boy. That cleared the air for him; maybe it stripped off my English clothes. Anyway he offered to get me on either the *Tribune* or the *Evening Post*, and I went home, happy and proud, to discuss with my family the choice I had between those two New York papers.

I can't recall what decided us, but I think it was only that the *Evening Post* was an evening paper; I could be home at night and so have time to do some literary work. However it was, I took a note from Mr. Johnson to Joseph B. Bishop, an editorial writer on the *Post*. Bishop frowned, but he led me out to the city room and introduced me to Henry J. Wright, the city editor, who looked helplessly at me and, I thought, resentfully at Bishop.

“I don't need any more reporters,” he said to Bishop, “but,” to me, “you can come in next Monday and sit down out there with the reporters, and as I get a chance, I'll try you out — on space.”

I didn't know what that meant, but I didn't care. I had a job. As I described it to my wife and her mother, Josephine was not elated as her mother was, and the next Monday when I sat out there in the

city room, ignored, while all the world seemed to be in a whirl, I was not elated either. The next day I saw "Larry" Godkin, the editor who wrote the leaders I read and reread, admiring; he passed by the city door. Bishop nodded to me once, but neither Wright nor the other reporters looked my way. Interesting fellows they seemed to be; they must know all the mysteries of a great city. They did not talk much, but I overheard enough to infer that they were familiar and bored with sport, politics, finance, and society. I was awed by the way they would, upon a few words from the city editor, dart or loaf out of the room, be gone an hour or so, come in, report briefly, and then sit down, write, turn in their copy carelessly, and lie back and read, idly read, newspapers.

One afternoon about one o'clock Mr. Wright came into the room, and seeing no one there but me, exclaimed impatiently and went out. A moment later he came back and right up to me.

"See here," he said, "there's a member of a stockbrokerage firm missing. Disappeared utterly. Something wrong. Go and see his partner and find out why the man is gone, whether there's funds missing too."

He handed me a memorandum giving the firm name and address in Wall Street. An assignment! I was to report. I darted out of the office into the elevator, and asking anybody for directions, found my way to Wall Street — Wall Street! — and the office of the lost broker. His partner rebuffed me. "No, I don't know why he skipped. No idea. No, nothing missing. How should there be?" But I wasn't going to fail on my first chance; so I persisted, asking questions, all about the missing man, his character, antecedents, habits, and when that caused only irritation, I asked about Wall Street. The broker soon was talking; we moved into his private office, sat down, and I told him the story of my life; he told me his, and I was thinking all the time how I could write something interesting about the ethics of a stockbroker; I had long since been convinced that the missing broker was innocent of anything more than a drink or an escapade with a woman, when all of a sudden the partner sprang up and said:

"Well, you are the most persistent son of a gun I ever met in all my life, and you win. I'll give you what you seem so sure of anyhow. My partner has not only skipped, I don't know where; he has taken every cent there was in the office, in the banks, and — then some." He named the amount, and I, astonished by the revelation, but satisfied that I had a front-page sensation, ran back to the office, where I astonished my city editor.



"Really?" he said. "You are sure? It's libel, you know, if it's wrong. He told you himself, the partner did? Sure? Umh— Well, write it, and we'll see."

I had pencils all sharpened — sharpened every day — ready for this moment, and I went to work. It was easy enough to report the facts, but I felt I must write this big news as the news was written. That I had studied in my idle hours, the newspaper style, and that was not easy. I labored till the city editor darted out to see what I was doing; he saw; he read over my shoulder the writes and re-writes of my first paragraph, and picking up one, said, "This is enough." And away he went with it. All I had to do was to lie back in a chair and wait to read my stuff in print, a long wait, perhaps half an hour, till three o'clock, when the last edition went to press, and then twenty minutes before the paper came down. And then when it came down, the damp, smelly paper, my paragraph wasn't in it! I searched again and again, with anxiety, hope, dread. I did not care for the money; the space was too short to count, but I felt that my standing as a reporter was at stake, and so, when I was at last convinced that my "story" was left out, I got up and dragged home, defeated and in despair. I told Mrs. Bontecou about it, not my wife, and was comforted some. If I failed at journalism, the old lady argued, there still was literature.

The facts of my story appeared in the morning newspapers, but they were better, more neatly, briefly stated, than I had put them; perhaps I had failed, not as a reporter, but as a writer. And this conclusion was confirmed at the office, where the city editor said "Good morning" to me and, after all the other reporters were gone out, gave me an assignment to ask the superintendent of schools something. One more chance.

Braced to make the most of it, I gave that official a bad hour. He had to answer, not only the question the city editor asked, but others, many others. He found himself telling me all about the schools, education and its problems, and his policy. I had some ideas on that subject, and he got them; and he had to accept or refute them. He became so interested that, when he had to break off, I was invited to come back another day to "continue our conversation." Good. I returned to the office and wrote a column interview, beginning with the city editor's question and the answer. This time, when the paper came out it had my story, but cut down to the first question and answer, rewritten as an authoritative statement of fact. My reporting was all right; my writing was not. The next day, a Friday, I had to

go out, confirm a reported suicide, and telephone the news, which another reporter took down and wrote.

That afternoon I saw reporters clipping from the cut files of the *Post*. I asked what it was for, and one of them said he was making up his bill. He cut out his own stories, stuck them together in a long strip, and measuring them with a foot rule, reckoned up the amount of space and charged for it so much a column. I did the same, and my poor little bill of earnings for my first week of practical life was something like two dollars and ten cents. And I was not ashamed of it; I was reassured, if not proud.

Nor was that all. As I was finishing this task the city editor called me up to his desk and bade me rewrite as a separate story for the Saturday paper the interview I had had with the superintendent of schools during the week. He suggested the idea or theme to write it around, and I, elated, stayed there in the office till closing time, grinding out my first long "story." And the next day I had the deep gratification of reading it at full length, the whole thing as I had written it. I measured it, secretly, and it came to four dollars plus — a fine start for my next week.

That Sunday was a bore; I could hardly wait for Monday to go on with my reporting, and talking with my wife and her mother, I developed ideas and plans. There were several promising questions to put to the superintendent of schools; the news suggested other men to see and talk to, and no doubt now the city editor himself would ask me to do more. When I walked into the office on Monday morning, eager and confident, I was dashed by the way I was ignored. No greetings from anybody, and as the morning wore on and the other reporters were sent off on assignments, I realized heavily that I was not to be used. I took my hat and told the city editor I would like to go out on a quest of my own. He nodded consent, and I went and had with the superintendent of schools a long interview which I wrote and handed in. It did not appear in the paper, and for two days I was ignored and got nothing out of my assignments. The men I tried to see were not in or would not see me. I had the experience so common for reporters of being defeated, and in an obscure way, too. Toward the end of the week I was sent out to see a rapid-transit commissioner and got some news which pleased the city editor: a formal, printed statement, which was printed. That was all. My space bill was about six dollars. But on Saturday, too late to be included, appeared my interview with the superintendent of schools.

With this to start with again, I could live over Sunday and was

ready to dive on Monday into my journalism. I had to be my own city editor, but I could be, now. I got another school story, which was printed; it was news; and another which was held, I knew now, for Saturday. I called again on the rapid-transit commissioner, and he gave me a brief interview which I used to tempt the other commissioners to answer. That was news and appeared right away. So was a statement by the mayor which I went for all by myself. Somebody had said something in print that was critical in a small way of some department, and his office being open to the public, I walked in and talked to him about it. My bill that week was something like fifteen dollars.

My system was working, and, I learned afterward, was amusing the staff and interesting the city editor, who described it as I could not have described it. It was a follow-up system, well known in journalism but unknown to me as a method. Every time I was sent to or met a man in a position to furnish news, I cultivated him as a source and went back repeatedly to him for more news or more general views on the news. If there was a news story in the papers, and not too big, I would read it through for some angle overlooked and slip out to the persons involved and ask some questions. My contribution often appeared as a part of some other reporter's story, usually at the end, but several times as the lead. And always there were school-news articles from my superintendent, who was talking policy to me weekly and letting me visit and write about schools. These articles brought letters to the editor, which showed that we were tapping a field of interest. I had a free hand here till, later, there was an education department which included the universities and private schools, and so brought in advertising. But there was the art museum, too, to "cover" and report; rapid transit with its plans, not only for transportation in the city, but for real estate, park, and street development. Every time the city editor sent me into a field for a bit of news I got what he wanted and went back for more general reports. He used me very little, however, leaving me to my own devices; and his reason came out when, after a few months, my bills were running up to fifty, sixty, and more dollars a week, and the other reporters were taking rather unfriendly notice of me.

One Friday, as I was making out my bill, William G. Sirrene, a fine Southern boy who was one of the star reporters, looked over my shoulder and exclaimed, "What's that? Seventy-two dollars! Why, that's nearly three times what I'm getting on salary."

He called out to the others the amount of my bill, and when they

also exclaimed, he explained, "Why, you are the best-paid man on the staff!"

I felt like exclaiming myself. It was news to me. I had no knowledge of salaries or earnings on the paper; all I knew was that I was supporting myself and my wife at last, saving a little each week, and driving on for more, and more. And I would have given it all to be a regular reporter like Sirrene or the others, and that is what I was asked to do. I think now that some of the reporters, not Sirrene, "kicked" to the city editor that I, a new man, was being paid more than they were, the veterans. Anyway he sent for me, and explaining that my bills were running too high, asked me if I would be changed from space to a salary, the best salary they paid the ordinary reporter, thirty-five dollars a week.

"Then," he said, "I can use you more myself on more important news."

I not only consented, I was dazed with the implication of my triumph. All became clear in that short talk with my chief. I had not been sent off on assignments because I was making too much money on my own and I had "made good." Even my first disappointment, the failure to print my news of the defalcation of the missing broker, was to my credit. The city editor did not dare print the report, by a new and untried man, of a piece of libelous news; he had sent an old reporter down to confirm it, and the broker who had talked to me not only repeated what he told me; he had spoken well of me; but by the time the confirmation was delivered, it was too late. The paper was gone to press. I was "reliable, quick, and resourceful," the city editor said, as he made me a regular reporter.

In a word I was a success, and though I have never since had such a victory and have come to have some doubt of the success of success, I have never since failed to understand successful men; I know, as I see them, how they feel inside.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Point out details of Mr. Steffens's search for a job which a young person of today might experience. Which are somewhat different from the average experience of today?
2. What new impression of the inside of newspaper life do you gain from this chapter? Does it attract or repel you? How do the experiences of reporters on your school paper compare with this?
3. Characterize Mr. Steffens, his wife, and his mother-in-law. How does the last compare with the stock conception of mothers-in-law?

4. Point out examples of Mr. Steffens's frankness in writing both of himself and of the people who had some part in his life. How does he compare in this with Mark Twain and Garland? How does his sense of humor compare with these others?

5. Select good examples of Mr. Steffens's vivid style, his use of short clinching sentences, of suspense, of climax.

### *For Ambitious Students*

6. You will enjoy reading other parts of this *Autobiography*, especially Part I, leading up to the chapter you have read, which opens Part II.

7. Write an account, from your own experience if possible, of looking for a job, reporting for the school paper, or something else suggested by this chapter.

## MALVINA HOFFMAN (1887- )

When P. T. Barnum brought Jenny Lind to America, her accompanist was a young German musician, Richard Hoffman. In New York Richard married a talented American girl and settled down to the life of a music teacher. The youngest of their five children, Malvina, inherited her father's artistic temperament and his great love of music, which she says "possesses" her more than any other art. Her own greatest power of expression, however, has proved to be in plastic art. She tells us that her first attempt was at the age of sixteen when the death of her elder sister impelled her to model a little clay figure of Grief. Later the failing health of her father made her wish to perpetuate his personality by a life-sized bust — her first major piece of work. The affection between father and daughter was unusually deep. Only two weeks before his death he said to her, "My child, I'm afraid you're going to be an artist. It's a long, hard road and you have to travel most of the time entirely alone. I am seventy-eight years old and can leave you very little of this world's earthly goods; but if I can leave you my ideals, perhaps they will be worth more to you than anything else. Above all you must *be* an artist; after that you may create art."

After her father's death she studied in Paris under the famous Rodin. When the World War was declared, she returned to America and never saw her master again, for he died in 1917; but after the armistice she was recalled to Paris to help arrange exhibits of his sculptures both in France and England. In Yugoslavia, where she worked under Herbert Hoover for the relief of starving children, she first became interested in various racial characteristics in the faces of soldiers — an important step toward her life-work. The Yugoslav sculptor Meštrovic, with whom she studied, warned

her that she must learn the principles and technical side of sculpture *better* than most men before she could start *even* with them, for the preconceived idea that women were amateurs in art would be a handicap to her. Her record of accomplishments proves that she conquered the handicap.

After her marriage to the violinist Samuel Grimson and several years of art production in New York, she yearned to follow up her old interest in racial characteristics. Consequently she sailed for Africa with her husband and sister, and later continued her modeling in European capitals. As a result, about sixty men were kept busy for months casting in bronze the figures she had made. Her wide reputation for this type of work brought her the phenomenal offer from the Field Museum which is recounted in the following chapter from her autobiography, *Heads and Tales*. After reading it you will probably want to continue reading the book itself — about that amazing trip around the world in which she, her husband (who took two thousand photographs and many movies), a secretary, and an assistant encircled the globe. They traveled on forty different types of ships and carried twenty-seven pieces of baggage, some holding life-sized clay models. It is a great adventure, full of such unusual bits of experience as how she deflected the interest of a wild man of Borneo from head-hunting to head-modeling, in which he became quite proficient.

Malvina Hoffman's sympathetic feeling for all types of mankind, as shown in this opening chapter and throughout the book, indicates that she has, indeed, followed her father's advice first to *be* an artist before trying to create art.

## THE HALL OF MAN

IN FEBRUARY, 1930, I went to Chicago in response to an unexpected telegram from the Field Museum.

"Have proposition to make, do you care to consider it? Racial types to be modeled while traveling round the world."

Sudden vistas of remote islands and mysterious horizons flooded over my imagination — escape from the city life, discovery of new worlds, conflict with the elements. Infinite new windows of life seemed to open before me.

What lay beyond those windows is set down in this book, which describes my adventures and experiences of "head-hunting" in the near and far corners of the earth — and how the hundred racial types in the Hall of Man of the Field Museum in Chicago were selected and modeled on the road.

Perhaps the first question the reader would like to ask before embarking on the risk of reading this book would be: How did such an idea as the Hall of Man in bronze originate, and why in Chicago?

To know the answer, you would have to be interested enough in the subject of man to explore the ethnographical<sup>1</sup> museums and find out how this subject has been studied and exhibited up to the present time. The very name over the entrance to most halls — anthropology<sup>2</sup> — evokes in our minds dummies of sawdust or painted plaster with staring glass eyes and dusty false hair which has become partially unglued because — “there is never enough money for upkeep.” You would also have to understand that the president and the trustees of Field Museum in Chicago are a very alert and courageous group of men. To keep abreast of the times, they decided, after investigating the reasons why the anthropology halls in all countries were generally empty and the snake and monkey houses always crowded, to step out of the tradition and take a long chance. They felt that “the races of man” should look alive, and be actual figures and heads that anyone could recognize and feel to be authentic, without being repulsive; so they decided to try sculpture as a means of revealing man to his brother.

To answer a second question: How did the Field Museum happen to select me for the interpretation of their project — perhaps you had better read this book and visit the Hall of Man in Chicago. This may give you a clue — although, between you and me, I was never able to find the answer to the question myself.

Imagine yourself being asked to sign away your life and energy for an indefinite number of years and to leap into the dark from a high precipice, as I did when, within eighteen hours after my arrival in Chicago, I decided to sign that memorable contract with the Field Museum. The job was a hundred heads — one head had I — but the chance was the best there was — “to do or die.”

No one could give me the rules of the game — they had to be made as the game progressed. There could be no rigid limitations or calculations: we were taking a big chance, both of us, and there was only one basis of understanding between these gentlemen in Chicago and the artist from New York — it was that of complete mutual confidence.

Once launched, I realized there was no turning back. If I started, I would in all conscience and allegiance be compelled to carry the project to a finish — not counting its exhaustion or its costs.

I remember vividly how my knees shook as I stood facing the row

<sup>1</sup> **ethnographical**: pertaining to the study of the races of man as to their geographical distribution and how they have adapted themselves to their environment.

<sup>2</sup> **anthropology**: the study of the races of man in all aspects — physical, geographical, cultural, etc.

of keen, observant faces of the men whom I had never seen before and who had come to Mr. Field's office to hear him read the outline of his original plan for the Hall of Man. The first idea was to engage four or five artists to collaborate on the scheme — sending them to various countries to model their subjects "on the spot." I cannot forget what courage it took on my part to say that I could not work under these conditions, but that I would like to present them with an entirely different scheme the following morning. They agreed to postpone their decision.

I went back to my little room at the Drake Hotel overlooking Lake Michigan, which under the gale had taken on the appearance of the North Atlantic in January. I faced the crucial moment that comes but once in a lifetime. Hour after hour I held my head in my hands and tried to think into the future, tried to face the inevitable problems and risks and find possible solutions. Many times I wanted to call my husband on the long-distance telephone and ask his advice, but I felt that to do this would be a lack of courage on my part. After all, it was my own risk and my own responsibility, and I knew that I could count upon his loyalty and complete co-operation. I feared that the years of intense effort and unknown complications that would be a part of this proposed long journey, with so much constant work, might be too much of a strain to expect either of us to withstand — and yet something stronger than doubt and more inevitable than calculations took hold of me in the wee hours of dawn, and I started drafting the many pages of my proposed scheme. My daemon<sup>1</sup> had cast his spell over me and I was a mere instrument under his dominion.

By eight o'clock my plan was completed and I engaged a typist to make it into a businesslike-looking paper — a good deal of red ink, and impressive numbered paragraphs.

At ten o'clock the three gentlemen met me at the museum in the same awe-inspiring office of huge dimensions, with a carpet so soft that I felt as if I were crossing the ninth green of a golf course. Everything seemed to my distorted vision to appear over-life-size and ominous in the extreme. I was acutely aware of belonging to the atom family.

I told them that the idea of getting a consistent, homogeneous ensemble by combining the works of many sculptors was impossible, to say nothing of the sanguinary struggle that would undoubtedly be waged during the years between the divergent opinions of the various

<sup>1</sup> *daemon*: a controlling spirit for either good or bad — variant of *demon*, which usually suggests a bad spirit.



artistic temperaments. I felt that the project must depend upon one artist alone, who would give himself or herself entirely and wholeheartedly to the enterprise and bear the responsibility for its failure or its success. I stated that, if I were chosen to do this work, I would be ready to assume all the risks and complete the task to the limit of my physical endurance. (I felt, after I had said this, as if I had entered the uncharted arena of no man's land.)

After my new proposal had been studied and accepted, I was instructed to return to New York and start work at once. Four months later it was decided that I should go to Paris and make all the necessary arrangements with museums and anthropologists to study the European and Asiatic types.

The Field Museum, in constant communication with all other ethnographical institutions, prepared the way, many months ahead, for our arrival in every place we visited. The spontaneous co-operation that responded to their requests to advise and aid the project was most encouraging to us all.

So intense was the effort and so engrossing the problem, that the first three years sped past us with an alarming rapidity. After this I felt an imperative necessity to visualize the compositions of the completed hall, before continuing any further activity. The figures were being cast into bronze and shipped to Chicago, and the problem of variety and arrangement was looming ahead of me. I cabled for time off to make a small-scale model of the hall — so that each full-length figure and bust might find its eventual position in relation to the whole. Every pedestal and base had to be specially designed for each subject. Partitions, wall spaces, floor covering, indirect lighting were now studied. Although there were about twenty racial types still left to be modeled, the general aspect of the hall was sufficiently complete to make it possible to open to the public on June 6, 1933.

This was almost simultaneous with the opening in Chicago of the International World's Fair known as the "Century of Progress," and it was gratifying to the Field Museum to be able to record that over two million people visited the new Hall of Man during its first year of existence.

On entering the hall, the visitor sees a long gallery leading to a central octagonal room, beyond which is another long hall. The heroic-sized bronze group representing the three main divisions of the human race (White, Yellow, and Black) and surmounted by a globe is the central point of interest in the octagonal room. Flanked on both

sides of the galleries are thirty-four full-length figures standing against the flat wall spaces left between the alcove rooms, of which there are four on each side of the long room.

In these alcoves are set the heads and busts representing the subdivisions of the main races which are shown in the full-length figures. All the lighting is reflected from the high ceiling and the walls are a pale golden beige color; the flooring is the color of natural wood. The pedestals and bases are of polished dark walnut, and the bronzes themselves vary from the darkest African Negroes to the paler shades of tan and golden metal.

Before the end of this century many of the primitive races which are now represented in bronze in this hall and modeled from living subjects will have disappeared into the dim records of history.

The first contract did not include the possibility of bronze busts and statues (although I saw this quite definitely as an eventual and hoped-for goal), but called for painted plaster models with real hair and glass eyes. Here was a "dangerous crossing ahead" — but I sensed the fact that if I insisted at this point upon the sculptor's dream of bronze or marble I would lose the chance of exploring the world, and that the museum would immediately turn to other artists who would gladly carry out the plan of painted plaster. The chance of combining art and science in permanent plastic form struck me as a step of vital importance, even if superhuman effort might be needed to accomplish it. Something told me that if I could prove this conviction by the first months of work the idea of bronze as the ultimate medium would be automatically instilled into the minds of these men. My faith in things unseen was strong, and in a crisis there often comes the power for the need; and so it was that I signed up for painted plaster, real hair, and glass eyes, knowing absolutely that within six months this part of the contract would be changed without a struggle. Such was the case.

The result of this first tryout immediately removed any further idea of "real hair and glass eyes." The verdict was given quite painlessly and was unanimous. Half the battle was won.

During the first summer I made the full-length figures of two African types. These I had cast into bronze at my own risk, and patined<sup>1</sup> to suggest the dusky skin and color of my models.

When Mr. Stanley Field saw these completed in Paris, he at once saw their added value in the metallic medium; the problem of glass

<sup>1</sup> **patined**: treated with acids to produce different effects of shade and texture in the surface.

cases and inevitable breakages and chipping of painted plasters vanished, and he immediately cabled to Chicago that his mind was made up to use every means possible to have all the figures and heads made in bronze, if financial assistance could be found to make this added expense a possibility. The cables between Paris and Chicago were kept busy until all was decided and a new contract was drawn up. My belief in the ultimate result was tremendously revived, and the secret goal was now entirely dependent upon the standard of my own work — with no further psychological barriers. Everything was to be in bronze, patined to suggest the varieties of skin colors, including the symbolic group fifteen feet high for the center of the hall — with the possibility of a few marble and stone heads still lurking in the background of my mind to add variety and interest to the ensemble. Four of these eventually came into being and are set in shadow boxes in the alcoves of the Hall of Man.

Each race left its mark upon my consciousness with a vivid impression. I have tried by both the gestures and pose of the various statues, as well as by the characterization in the facial modeling, to give a convincing and lifelike impression. I watched the natives in their daily life, fishing, hunting, praying, and preparing their food, or resting after a day's work. Then I chose the moment at which I felt each one represented something characteristic of his race, and of no other. To register accurately just these subtle gestures and poses, I had to efface my own personality completely and let the image flow through me directly from the model to the clay, without impediment of any subjective mood or conscious art mannerism on my part.

For example, our own American Indian is caught in a gesture which in his indigenous hand language is only understood by his own people to mean, "I have seen my enemy and killed him."

The Kashmiri Brahman is represented in a pose of extraordinary selfless meditation. Although it is quite natural for this man to sit as he does, it would be practically impossible for any of our American boys to assume this pose for any length of time, if at all.

The Hawaiian surfboard rider is caught in a moment of extreme action — the sense of balance and speed being suggested by the position of his arms, and the intense expression of his face. If I had tried to pose him, I would have lost the essence of just what constituted his racial individuality.

The Oriental calm of Asiatic types I have tried to represent in a varied collection of people, including high priests of Outer Mongolia,

scholars, scientists, and ladies of high degree of China, Manchus, modern students, and rickshaw coolies — each one completely different from his neighbor in racial form, expression, and personal characterization.

Each subject was a new challenge. No human beings are ever alike, and in constructing their facial forms it was an ever-changing problem to determine just how their features were set, and how the line of their profiles could be drawn with such accuracy and definition that later on one of their own people might recognize at a glance from just what area I had drawn my material. My mind became sensitized like a photographic plate, and to keep the impressions vivid and apart demanded endless concentration at a high pitch.

Libraries are stocked with data on ethnography and anthropology. If those professors who by force of circumstances are obliged to draw their knowledge from these canyons of books and mounds of dusty skulls could be enabled to travel far and wide — what stimulating surprises they would have! How many reports would have to be moved from the "fact" to the "fiction" department!

Even the scientific expert must be on his guard, for primitive races have a keen sense of humor and delight in fooling the stranger. I recently heard the tale of a representative from Hollywood who wished to record a ceremonial chant of the American Indian on a sound disk. The Indian singers very politely consented to comply with his request, and he left the reservation feeling elated at his achievement. It was years later, when he met an Indian visiting California, that he asked for a translation of his unique record. To his dismay he was told that the words meant: "Does the White Man think that he can buy our secrets?" This was repeated in many variations, throughout the entire chant.

The more timid or apprehensive the model, the more important I found it to be entirely alone with him. These people, generally called savages, are far more intuitive and psychic than we are. It takes but a few seconds for them to discover if we are sincere or only bluffing. They sense this at once, and their actions are directed by this sensation. Words become quite unnecessary as a means of communication — a look of the eye, a smile, or a quick gesture can establish a relationship in which confidence and humor can easily flow from one individual to any other.

If a group of jungle folk or Indians gather about the white visitor, there is a tacit method of identifying the stranger at once. Is he to be taken within the circle of their confidence or not? If not, he might

just as well fold up his tent and move along, for whatever he collects or observes will be falsified and his observations will be based on conscious misinformation.

The races of man, studied as a whole, or in groups, such as nations, tribes, or clans, would be a simpler problem than that of thoroughly understanding one man — the individual. For are we not all strangers? — to each other and to ourselves?

If we efface the surface differences of the various races, we come to their universal similarities — “*plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*”<sup>1</sup> We must learn the trick of removing masks and false fronts to study our unsuspecting victims — with the lid off. For a man to discover himself generally necessitates a calamity or some overpowering revelation of beauty.

Primitive races, civilized city dwellers, and Siamese cats all share the same characteristics. The difference consists chiefly in the traditional manner by which they disguise their thoughts and evade the expression of their natural instincts.

Every race, creed, and color is caught in the same eternal struggle for existence — to eat, to sleep, and to respond to the natural urge to procreate one's kind. The male seeks his mate, the eternal Eve seeks to find protection and leadership in her Adam. Throughout the ages primitive people have had instinctive pride in continuance of race.

Highly civilized humans often try to evade this responsibility of cultivating family trees. They appear as a challenge to their atrophied sense of courage and integrity. They seek to escape facing their own selves — to see themselves objectively.

Self-knowledge is the subtlest art of all. This is forced upon us sooner or later, and the more we evade the issue the more layers will we have to penetrate before we reach the core.

What we experience is what we bring upon ourselves, but to acknowledge this is to walk through fire that consumes utterly. There is a code of ethics for each stratum of society — the wording changes, the titles of religion vary according to time, place, and founder, but when these ethics are studied, dissected, and revealed, the fathers of all creeds speak with the same meaning; even the head-hunter defends his friend or his young at the risk of his own life. More than this cannot be asked of Christian or pagan. The Great Universal Spirit comes close to those who seek Him and when He does, mind triumphs over

<sup>1</sup> “*plus . . . chose*”: “the more that changes, the more it is the same thing.”

matter — in the temple, in the mosque, or in the Indian hogan, where men gather in concentrated prayer and conviction. If we watch the medicine man paint his age-old sacred symbols with the delicate streams of colored sand, and ask the sick man who is being healed by this how he feels after the ceremony, he will answer, "Better, stronger, more alive." Experience the force of will exerted by the Yogi in meditation; go to the River Ganges and see the ecstasy of faith in the eyes of the pilgrims who drink the same water that has laved the leper and the victims of the black plague; watch the mothers in Brittany who have given their sons to the sea and who, in their sorrow, find pride in their sacrifice to their Holy Mother. The Calvary stands stark and gray on the rocks of the sea, but brave men still give their lives and tears run down the cheeks of their sons who are still too young to go with them down to their Mother Sea.

Today the complexity of modern life has injected into the picture the question of eugenics, economics, and mechanics, to the destruction of many of the primitive forces which have given endurance, courage, and equilibrium to our aboriginal brothers. By reason of their loss, the present generation has a chronic case of nerves, while Mother Nature sits back in her easy chair and smiles. She takes her toll if we evade her by sins either of excess or escape; man and animal alike, we are slaves to her omnipotence.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. This selection shows the opposite situation in a person's life from that given in the preceding selection. Here the job seeks the person rather than the person seeking the job. Which account is more dramatic? What differences are there in the nervous strain upon the person involved? Discuss the possibilities of having the job seek the person in your community.
2. List some of the difficulties and dangers in Malvina Hoffman's situation which took courage to face. Can you think of others than those she actually mentions? What other famous women can you name who have met some critical moment with courage?

### *For Your Vocabulary*

3. *Indigenous*, an adjective Miss Hoffman applies to the American Indian's hand language (page 434), is one of a large group of English words built on the stem *gen*, to bear or give birth to. *Indigenous*, therefore, means born within a certain country or native to that place, as the kangaroo is

*indigenous* to Australia. We distinguish *indigenous* American literature from the writings based on foreign models. The *genesis* of anything is its first beginnings. *Eugenics* (page 437) combines a prefix meaning "good" with the same stem to produce a name for the study of influences that produce better hereditary qualities in individuals, or "good birth." *Homo-geneous* (page 431) uses a prefix for "like" and means "of like nature." *Ingenuity* is inborn cleverness distinguished from skill developed by training. When a man faces an entirely new problem, he must rely on his *ingenuity* to work it out. Elsewhere in this book you will find mention of *genealogists*, persons who make a profession of tracing family trees, birth records. How many other words built on this useful stem can you list?

### *For Ambitious Students*

4. *Heads and Tales* is richly illustrated. If possible obtain a copy of the book for the pictures as well as for further reading. It opens up wide possibilities for study and class discussion of the characteristics of different races. See the "Portrait of An Apache Brave," page 446.

5. If you are interested in art, study the pictures of Miss Hoffman's other sculptures as well as those in the Hall of Man. Which ones particularly appeal to you and why? Miss Hoffman's career illustrates the close relationship among three arts: sculpture, music, and the dance. Show through specific illustrations how this is true. Valuable special reports:

- a. The work of Rodin and Meštrovic (Miss Hoffman's masters)
- b. Various processes of making bronze figures from the clay model

### DR. ARTHUR E. HERTZLER (1870— )

With the increase of knowledge of scientific medicine, there has developed in recent years a great interest in books of personal experience written by the doctors themselves. So numerous have these books become that one of our witty professional writers said he was about to start practicing medicine to get even with the doctors who were all practicing literature these days. Among such books an unusually popular one has been *The Horse and Buggy Doctor* by Dr. Arthur E. Hertzler. The appeal of this book lies not in the literary quality of its style, which is often obviously lacking, but in the forthright character and dry wit of the author himself and in the intrinsic interest of his story. This account of a passing era of medical practice will eventually have great historic value.

In the opening chapters Dr. Hertzler pictures himself as a gangling farm-boy, miserably shy and unhappy among his classmates in the town school, but ever driven forward by his desire to be a doctor. He startles us with

the meager entrance requirements of certain medical schools of that day: ability to write English, a recommendation from a minister, and one hundred dollars. He takes us through his long process of education both here and in Germany. Then he becomes the "horse and buggy" doctor, as we see him in the following chapters. Eventually he won professional recognition through his successful practice and his thirteen books on various aspects of medicine. But he remained a "country doctor" by preference, loyal to his small town of Halstead, Kansas, in spite of many opportunities to go elsewhere. Here he built a hundred-and-fifty-bed hospital and named it the Agnes Hertzler Memorial Hospital for the one of his three daughters who had died in childhood. In 1933 he presented this hospital to the Sisters of St. Joseph, and he is still an active member of its staff. *The Horse and Buggy Doctor* (1938) was written as a record of his life to leave to his grandson.

## COUNTRY PRACTICE

COUNTRY practice was so called because it was just that. The patients lived in the country and it was necessary for the doctor to drive out into the country to visit them. The doctors, for the most part, lived in the villages but the village inhabitants formed only a very small part of the doctor's practice. There was but little office practice because patients were treated with the simple remedies at home unless or until the state of the disease seemed to be threatening or the pain became too great to bear.

Country practice, therefore, naturally divided itself into two divisions, first that of transportation, the act of conducting oneself to the bedside of the patient; second, what one did after he arrived at the bedside of the patient.

The means of transportation at the beginning of any practice was preferred in the order named: horse or team and buggy; horse and road cart, a two-wheeled vehicle with a simple and very hard board seat on which no cushion could be fastened; horseback; and finally just plain everyday walking it or pedaling a lowly bicycle. The bicycle was fine when roads were good and the distance not too great but I never could suppress an inferiority complex while riding one. A long-legged man never can look professional riding a bicycle. Therefore after I began to get some consultation practice this means of transportation was abandoned.

Naturally most of the sicknesses occurred when the weather was inclement, either very hot or very cold and stormy and the roads indescribably bad; in fact, there were no roads. At such seasons I



sometimes spent the greater part of the twenty-four hours in the buggy. Sometimes in the spring and fall when the weather was fine there might not be a country call for a week or even longer. When the roads were good the population suddenly became provokingly healthy. Not only was country driving time-consuming and fatiguing but at times it became exceedingly inconvenient. But we accepted it as part of the job. It was this phase of the work, it may be noted, that made many young men shun country practice. Being inured to such things by life on the farm and being delighted to earn enough to eat with a fair degree of regularity, I accepted the conditions with eagerness.

The present automobile speed gives one a very poor idea of the trials of travel by team. Nowadays the country doctor whizzes into the country at reckless speed and comes back faster. Doctors are notorious speed fiends. I recently rode with a doctor at a speed of seventy-five miles an hour on a road that averaged seven curves a mile. The reason? None whatever — it is just the small-boy hang-over. It is a trite question when one sees a speeder, even a doctor, to ask what he will do with the few minutes saved by the excessive speed. The answer is the same in all cases — nothing. It was even so in the horse and buggy days. Some doctors dashed about with fine teams with much show. In such cases one could be sure that he was not going very far and for no great purpose. Such things did not fool the public for very long. Some other doctor who had preceded him in the community and employed the same antics, having proved unreliable after a time, the public remembered and classed the newcomer in the same category. It is interesting to note how the psychology of a man could be judged by the way he held the lines. A friend of mine, a most excellent horseman, used to remark to me that I did not drive; I just herded the horses along. That was exactly correct, but long drives do not permit driving a team.

Generally a speed of seven miles an hour was good time for a team in cold weather and good roads. In muddy roads, when a horse cannot exceed a walk, three miles an hour is average time. A mule will walk unmolested two and a half miles an hour; if urged he reduces this to two miles and if urged too strongly he may stop entirely and look back over his shoulder to inquire what you are going to do about it. This is one of those questions the form of which carries its own answer: to wit, nothing. On the whole, the mule was the most reliable means of transportation available. The great drawback of mule transportation, as I remember it, was that it was so undignified. For

the consulting doctor to arrive drawn by a span of unwilling mules was a very bad start as far as dignity was concerned. Be it remembered that dignity is a very important item to a young doctor — observe nowadays the hospital interns, magnificent, all decked out in white; but after one is established he acts naturally. But even then dignity had on occasion to give way to dependability. Though the mule occasionally backfires he does not run out of gas — no dead batteries, no flat tires. But one must learn to respect his individuality. Some of them have the disposition of a prima donna, and if their feelings are hurt they may repudiate their contract. I remember one eleven-mile trip into the country which required five hours with a span of mules hitched to an improvised sled. This trip is ever memorable because as I entered the house the patient called from an adjoining room, "Doc, you are too late." As indeed I was. Perforated appendix was the answer.

The buggy used by doctors was a single-seated four-wheeled vehicle to which one or two horses were attached. The buggy was preferred to a road cart and was used whenever the condition of the roads permitted. It was more comfortable and one could wrap himself up to greater advantage. The pull on the horse was considerably less and one could dodge in and out and past mudholes and it was easier to cross fields because one could make short turns. Besides, if one upset it was easy to right the vehicle again.

The use of the road cart had the advantage that one could, in a measure, protect himself; but the seat was a board affair and uncomfortable at best. The chief disadvantage, however, was their insecurity. A sudden lurch of the horse might cause distressing disarrangements of the passenger. For instance, I once rode dozing slumped over in a cart when a large dog attacked my horse. He raised up and gave a sudden lunge forward in an effort to strike the dog. Unwarned and unprepared, this precipitated me completely behind the cart and I found myself sitting flat in the road. Fortunately this unexpected event so surprised the dog that he took to his heels. Had he attacked me, I would have been at a serious disadvantage. Broncos were seldom hitched to a road cart. They had a way of tying themselves into a knot only to appear outside the shafts and not infrequently wrong end to. One of these little rascals I once had must have had Quaker blood, for as soon as hitched she would lie down and one had to wait until the spirit moved her; but when it did move her she jumped up and started off on a dead run and it was not easy to stick to the smooth board seat. Horseback riding was resorted to

only when there were no roads, a condition rare in prairie countries. A road cart permits the use of a lap robe, which is impossible on horseback because the bronco also has ideas of dignity. These animals, it may be mentioned, had a constitutional aversion to much-petticoated ladies, and a doctor trying to protect his legs by a blanket was classed in this group, so that the pony precipitated him with promptness and precision. When approaching these sad-eyed rascals, I could imagine them humming to themselves the tune of the lovelorn: "Juanita, I feel that we must part."

The buggy seat was usually from thirty to thirty-six inches long, suitable for seating two persons. This was all right as a seat but it made rather a short bed, particularly for a person afflicted as I am with excessive longitudinality. This made it necessary for me to stick my feet and legs through the top bows into the adjacent atmosphere when in a recumbent position. This was not exactly a graceful pose, but sleep thus obtained was better than none. Dignity obviously is less important at night when everybody else is asleep. Of course, in the out trip one could not sleep for long because the team had to be guided in the proper direction, but on the return trip the team could be depended on to go directly home — that is, some teams. My own horse, after he had been to a place a time or two, could be depended upon to go there unguided and he invariably returned home directly but in his own sweet time, which consisted in making about four or five miles an hour with some stops interposed for viewing the scenery or visiting with a wayside horse. When he stopped, it invariably wakened me and a jerk of the lines started him off at once, sometimes on a dead run for a short distance. . . .

Usually driving was just plain wearisome work, but trials and even dangers sometimes attended these country drives. A few specific instances may be mentioned in illustration. One night I had to cross a considerable stream which had a low water bridge. As I crossed on the out trip the water was just flowing over the floor of the bridge. When I returned, after several hours, the bridge was no longer visible but I estimated the water had risen only about a foot, which would permit easy crossing. But my horse had other ideas. He positively refused even to approach the water, so I turned, or rather he turned, around and came home by a circuitous route. Some days later an occurrence in a neighboring town caused me to go and inspect that bridge. It was gone. The occurrence just referred to befell a young doctor who tried to cross a bridge that was not there, and he was drowned. This same horse of mine saved me on two other occasions.

One of them occurred in one of my first trips when roads were strange to me. The water was even with the bridge but the approach on the opposite side was under water. I urged my horse to go through but he refused, so I backed off the bridge and sought another road. After the flood subsided I chanced to cross the bridge and discovered that the approach was eight feet below the level of the bridge. Had I tried to cross this flood it would certainly have been disastrous. I am a most excellent wader but eight feet is a bit beyond my capacity.

Dog trainers have a saying that in order to train a dog one must know more than the dog. In order to drive a horse in dangerous situations one must know more than the horse. I soon learned that in intelligence in dangerous situations my horse knew more than I and I always deferred to his judgment. One night he jumped a washout of a bridge approach which was fully six feet wide and fifteen feet deep. He cleared it together with the front wheels of the buggy but the hind wheels fell into the water; yet he dragged the wheels to safety after they had fallen some distance in the water. On a pitch-dark night finding myself in a buggy horizontal to the earth's surface nearly scared the daylights out of me. My patient lived a very short distance from the bridge and his father had expected to warn me not to cross. He had intended to guard the bridge with a lantern but I came sooner than expected.

My patient on this occasion was a small boy with an abscess in his neck. Obviously it needed opening. I placed my instrument bag on the table and proceeded to inspect its contents. I went to sleep while doing so — it must have been but momentarily; I closed my bag and went back to town, by another road, needless to mention. When I awoke the next morning I remembered that I had not opened that abscess. I hastened back to do the necessary operation. The family thought that after looking in my bag I found I lacked the necessary instruments and had gone back to town after them. They did not realize that I had gone to sleep. This instance illustrates the placidity of a weary country doctor. Within fifteen minutes after being frightened stiff by the fall of the hind part of the buggy into the water, I went to sleep hunting for instruments with which to open an abscess.

One of the most peculiar feelings I ever had occurred one night when I was awakened out of a nice sleep by a peculiar jerk of the buggy. I awoke with a start and my team was gone. There I sat in a buggy on a snow-covered prairie apparently without a team. The fact was, of course, that the team had run into a snow-filled ditch; once in, the loose snow covered them completely and they were quite

invisible to sleepy eyes. It was necessary to take my shovel and dig away the snow, unhitch the team, push the buggy away from the ditch, hitch up again and start in a different direction. Which direction to go was the problem. One might find other and deeper ditches. In such cases an experienced driver knows just exactly which way to go. He goes back from whence he came. Snow makes this possible but on dark muddy nights one did not know from whence he came any more than where he was going. One had on such occasion to fall back on the Cartesian<sup>1</sup> philosophy: namely, "I think, therefore I am," but this gives no information as to where one is or how long he will be. Descartes evidently was writing in his library. Had he been lost out on a prairie he would have written: "I can't think and I do not know where I am."

On this particular occasion I had slept so long that the team had lost its way and I was completely lost. Nothing was in sight except a wide level expanse of snow and I had no idea where there might be other ditches. I was scared. The glare of the moon on the snow made snow-covered buildings poorly visible. But I followed the golden rule of the prairies — when in doubt, trust to the horse. That worked out well in this case and after traveling several miles I got my bearings and could start out anew. I was five miles off the road that led to my patient. . . .

With the coming of the automobile new problems presented themselves to the country doctor. For a number of years they were too expensive and too unreliable to make them practical for the doctor's country driving. Besides, the roads were such that they could be used only during several months of the year. Many country doctors, however, provided themselves with the early models. For absorption of all spare money these were rivaled only by the private hospital. Having the latter, I had to deny myself the automobile even after they came in quite general use by my colleagues.

For those who did not drive one, automobiles were an unmitigated nuisance and often provided even dangerous situations. A team became frightened at dogs and attempted to run away, as already mentioned, but they retained some sense. After the dogs ceased their chasing, because of either fatigue or the bark of a six-shooter, the team calmed down and could be controlled usually in a quarter or half a mile. When the automobile began to invade the road it was quite a different matter. The team was frightened at the dogs; some-

<sup>1</sup> Cartesian: (kǎr tē'zhǎn) pertaining to the French philosopher Descartes (dǎ-kǎrt') 1596-1650.

times, indeed, it seemed to me they used the dogs just as an excuse for the exhibition of pure cussedness. But when they met the unknown gas wagon they were not frightened but utterly terror-stricken. They became uncontrollable, would turn back, upsetting the buggy, disregarded fences and ran wildly or kicked their way loose if their escape was obstructed. At night the flickering acetylene<sup>1</sup> light added to their terror. One could see the light for long distances and one had to drive into a farmyard or into a field and wait until the apparition had passed. This required aggravating periods of waiting until the car wheezed slowly past. Not uncommonly the car was stopped for repairs, in which event one had to detour. In the daytime some teams after a time became sufficiently accustomed to the cars that they would permit them to pass; but at night, never. An unpleasant by-product was that one did not dare to go to sleep in the buggy for fear that a car might appear. Fortunately, when the roads were muddy and the travel with a team was slowest one had no need to fear a car.

After cars became more practical I had assistants to do the local country driving and they wheezed along in the uncertain automobile. But I saw aplenty of it when the circle of my activities became greater and the automobile rides became supplementary to a train ride. Its disposition to cut all sorts of antics often worked hardships when one was anxious to reach a certain place in order to have daylight in which to perform an operation, if such should be needed, and that usually was the purpose of the trip. Thus I once was obliged to drain a gall bladder by the aid of a coal-oil lamp and a flashlight because of six tire punctures on a sixty-mile trip. . . .

During those years I gained an affection for the old Model T. They always got you there and brought you back, even though you were thoroughly battered and worn out during the process. If the tires failed they were simply removed and the journey completed on the rim. Two or three hundred miles over rough roads in a Model T just about exhausted everything there was to exhaust in the human form, but one got there.

Cars were not inclosed then and the early ones had no tops, many not even a windshield. One such trip stands in my memory. The prairie was putting on a good sample of a blizzard. The snow and sleet fell or traveled almost parallel. The wind was in the northwest and that was the direction of our journey, seventy-five miles of it.

<sup>1</sup> **acetylene**: used for headlights before the present incandescent lights. It produced a brilliant white flame.

The car had neither fenders, top nor windshield. The temperature was considerably below zero. Despite blankets, lap robes and all that, it was bitter cold and there was the cheering prediction by some of the old-timers that we would never make it. There were no places to stop and had anything gone wrong with the car the prediction held out to us presented a considerable probability of being correct. One cheerful old chap, who had formerly lived in my home town, remarked, "All hell won't stop Doc but, by crickey, I'm afeard he may land there tonight." During the course of the trip we came across a herd of cattle, some lying down, some standing rump to the storm. After we had missed a few by a narrow margin I admonished my driver to slow down. His reply was, "Doc, the gas won't shut off and I can't get at the brakes." His feet were bundled in the remains of an ancient buffalo robe, so that the pedals were out of his reach. We made the seventy-five miles in three and one-half hours. I met the doctor at this town and proceeded sixteen miles farther where I found a brain abscess which was successfully drained. One soon forgot a trip if there was something one could do at the journey's end.

Fortunately the automobiles of that day did not possess sufficient speed to cause any very serious accidents. They upset and had to be righted, but there was seldom competition for possession of any particular part of the road; consequently collisions did not occur. Of course, there were farm wagons and livestock to give a fair chance for a collision. I remember once my assistant was traveling at a high speed of about twenty miles an hour. Topless and windshieldless, the car rattled along over the rough road, rocking me peacefully to sleep. I was half reclining. The car hit the rear end of a farm wagon loaded with wheat. I took a complete somersault, landing on my feet some distance ahead of the car, hands still in my pockets. That was a rude awakening and a long journey. My old assistant still believes his fortune would be made if he had a movie of that experience.

More amusing to me was an experience of one of my assistants. He was bowling along in the small hours of the night. A mule was lying in the middle of the road unobserved by my assistant and, I presume, my assistant unobserved by the mule — at least there was no mutual recognition. The front wheel of the old Maxwell passed over the animal but the hind one did not. The result was that the mule was weighted down by the car and could not get up. It made too big a bump to get the car off and some farmers had to be summoned



*Culver*

THE NATIVE TOUCH IN SCULPTURE. An early sign of native inspiration in American sculpture was the work of John Rogers, whose groups like "Checkers Up at the Farm" showed typical Americans at their everyday activities. The general public loved them, and even critics found in them "an art inspired by the life of our times."





*Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*

IN THE CLASSIC TRADITION. Among the many splendid statues by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, one of the most famous is the draped figure on the Adams Memorial in Rock Creek Cemetery at Washington, D.C. All the grace and dignity of the classic tradition are to be found in this quiet figure, but even more impressive is the mysterious serenity that puzzles and fascinates beholders.



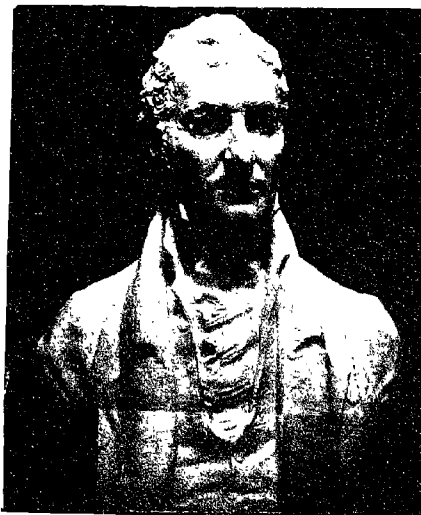
*Courtesy of Malvina Hoffman and The Field Museum*



*DeWitt Ward Studio*

PORTRAITS AND SYMBOLS "Portrait of an Apache Brave" (*above, left*) is one of Malvina Hoffman's racial studies for The Hall of Man (see page 428). Daniel C. French modeled his fine Emerson (*above, right*) from life. The portrait bust of Eli Whitney (*below, left*) is the work of Chester Beach, an outstanding modern. George Gray Barnard called his famous group (*below, right*) "The Two Natures of Man."

*DeWitt Ward Studio*



*Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*





*Studer Photo*



RECENT TRENDS. Modern American sculpture looks both forward and back. Stirring days in the old West are recaptured in the model (*above*) by Gutzon Borglum, the carver of mountains, for a statue to be erected in San Antonio in honor of the men who herded cattle up the trail in the seventies. Paul Manship's "Flight of Night" (*left*) illustrates the imaginative design and smooth workmanship characteristic of our newest school of sculptors.

*DeWitt Ward Studio*

to help extract the animal, none the worse for the experience. My assistant had a sense of humor, so did the neighbors and so no doubt did the mule so that a pleasant time was had by all, as the country newspapers are prone to describe a social event which goes off without a fight, or even with.

[Now that you have read an account of transportation, which Dr. Hertzler calls the first division of country practice, you will want to learn from a later chapter something of his second division: "what one did after he arrived at the bedside of the patient."]

Young doctors nowadays think that without a hospital operations are not possible. Doctors who do not operate sometimes excuse themselves by telling the patient that they cannot operate because there are no hospital facilities. This is a subconscious salving of their own incapacity. Whole communities are sometimes so impressed by this idea that they build hospitals in order that their local doctors may be able to operate. But they discover after the hospital is built that there was a miscalculation somewhere. If one gets a nice new gun for Christmas, that does not make one an expert marksman. Something more than a hospital and equipment is necessary.

The story of kitchen surgery should not be lost, because it presents many lessons which would be of value today if they were heeded. The one fundamental fact that surgeons must get results is incontrovertible. How they get them is of little importance, from the patient's point of view.

Kitchen surgery emphasized that two things, and two things only are necessary for the performance of an excellent operation: to wit, a surgeon and a patient. In comparison with these everything else pales into insignificance. Persons are prone to denounce what they know not of. Surgeons trained in hospitals scoff at the possibility of doing expert surgery under unfavorable situations. Let me pick the surgeon and I will guarantee a good job whether it be performed in our modern palaces or in a fence corner. I have been privileged to work for many years under the most favorable conditions in hospital appointments and capable assistants, but some of my best work has been done in kitchens under the most unfavorable conditions, as we view these things now. . . .

The kitchen lacked one chief value of the modern hospital: the inexperienced operator had no one to blame. It is never the surgeon's fault if infection follows an operation done in a modern hospital — never. The technic of the operating room is blamed. In such cases

the alleged dereliction is met by adding another sterile sheet over the patient, or someone else, or by adding another assistant. The latest stunt is to pin a sterile towel on the back of the surgeon. I'll bite — what is it for? I have never seen a surgeon sit on a wound, chances are they do not intend to sit on the wound, but there is nothing like being prepared for all possible contingencies. . . .

Each kitchen operation was a class of its own, depending on the nature of the trouble, the utensils available, and what assistance the local doctor could give. For instance, in the case of gall-bladder disease one drained where he might remove this organ if he were operating in a hospital. These limitations sometimes forced conservatism against generally adopted practices. Appendicular abscesses were drained. So forced to conservatism, finding the results better, I adopted it as a principle, a lesson most modern surgeons have forgotten.

After the examination had been made with sufficient detail to make a presumptive diagnosis the instruments were placed on the kitchen stove to boil. The surgeon then returned to the patient and completed the history and examination. That completed, if there was idle time, one visited with the patient and employed this opportunity to remove any fear he may have had of the operation in the beginning. One young lady played the piano while the instruments boiled. One lady even sang to me; I presume that was her idea of how to get even with doctor. Sometimes a facetious patient would come with a whetstone and offer to sharpen the "tools." Occasionally his services were accepted. This was supposed to be the height of humor. I think so still. . . .

In the preparation for the operation two general conditions prevailed. The one when the operation was agreed on beforehand and preparation could be made in anticipation of the surgeon's coming. In cases of emergency, of course, there could be no previous preparation.

In the first instance a well-lighted room was selected. All furniture and pictures were removed, the floor and walls scrubbed. A sheet was nailed before the windows to keep the neighbors from peeping in during the course of the operation. Then the wash boiler was half filled with water, which was boiled for an hour or more. A tea-kettle or two also were similarly prepared. This preliminary boiling accomplished, the containers were removed from the stove and allowed to cool. All this was done the day before the anticipated operation. Some doctors even had folding operating tables which they took to the patient's home the day before the surgeon was expected.

These preliminary preparations were, of course, in imitation of the hospital operating room. The boiling of the water was ritual. Well water is safe to use in any operation. I have tested it in the laboratory and have used it in its raw state for the making of solutions of local anesthetic in many hundreds of operations without a particle of trouble. Removing the pictures and scrubbing the walls belong to the same category. It did no real good; perhaps it did harm by agitating dust that had long reposed on pictures and the like. At any rate, I felt just as secure operating in a room where nothing had been disturbed.

After the surgeon arrived active preparations were begun. The portable table was set up. The parlor table was divested of the Bible and photograph album and placed beside the operating table. Whenever possible I carried regular hospital linen so that the requisitioned parlor table could be converted into a very convenient instrument table by covering it with a sheet. There was also a sheet for the patient and gowns for the surgeon and his assistant. Sponges were available, and in later years gloves. After the instruments had boiled they were removed from the dishpan and placed on the table, which had already been prepared by covering it with a sheet. This done, the conveniences approached those of a hospital. And speaking of luxuries, after automobiles came into use one ran the car up to the window of the room in which the operating was to be done. The headlights were turned on and a looking glass, held by a friend, was used to deflect the light from the car on the site of operation. There is no better light than this. Of course, if this friend fainted one had to get another helper. Such inconveniences were obviated by getting a woman to hold it in the first place. Women rarely faint at the sight of blood, or anything else. They may faint but never faint.

In contrast with the preceding, many homes were pitifully devoid of even the most meager requirements. In emergencies, too, there was no time for any preliminary work. Often I had nothing but a few instruments and no linens, as when the need for an operation was not anticipated or when the linens I carried had been used at some previous operation on the trip.

In such situations, if an extension table was available this was spread apart and the middle boards were placed lengthwise. This made the midportion of the table narrow so that the midportion of the patient could be approached more closely by the surgeon and his assistant. This was very desirable if the surgeon had a good assistant. If the assistant was incompetent the farther he was kept from the site of operation the better. If the assistant was incompe-

tent the operator could place the patient on his side of the table, the assistant on the other side where he could do little harm. If there was no table available a door could be removed from its hinges and placed on boxes for support. For one as tall as I barrels were the ideal support. . . .

The biggest scare I ever got was while doing an operation for intestinal obstruction. The offending band had been found and removed, fortunately. Just as closure of the wound was about to begin the man holding the coal-oil lamp started to faint and dropped the lamp. Fortunately, he tilted it toward himself, knocking off the chimney and putting out the flame before dropping it on the floor. There was no other lamp in the house. Someone thought she knew where there was a tallow candle, but was not sure. In the dark I placed several artery forceps on either edge of the wound and by crossing them was able to hold the wound together. It would be about six hours until daylight and that would be a long time to hold the forceps. Besides, the patient would be coming out from under the anesthetic, which would complicate the problem. While I was engaged in cogitation, the tallow candle was found and the closure of the wound proceeded. On the other occasion the same accident happened, but that time I had a flashlight in my overcoat pocket and, strange to relate, it worked — hence the delay was short. . . .

I look back on those days of kitchen surgery with unadulterated pleasure. No doubt about it, I saved many lives and made many friendships which have endured. Most of the doctors who were associated with me in these experiences are now dead, and of course many of the patients, happily most of them from old age. Many of the trips were terribly arduous, even worse. but these things are soon forgotten after a full meal and a warm fire, and an interesting specimen. Those days are gone forever. The coming generation of surgeons will not have a like experience. They will have to accept the word of the old kitchen surgeons that all that is needed for a good operation is a good surgeon and a patient.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What impression does this selection leave with you as to the desirability or undesirability of being a country doctor? List points for and against. Which conditions have been changed by modern improvements? Which are true of country practice even today?
2. Find examples of the author's dry wit and downright frankness. Is

he the type of doctor you would want to have attend you in an emergency? Why or why not? Discuss the personal qualities that go toward making a good doctor.

3. Vocabulary: precipitated, longitudinality, recumbent, circuitous, cogitation, incontrovertible, dereliction, presumptive, diagnosis, anesthetic.

### *For Ambitious Students*

4. The most famous picture of an American doctor in fiction is Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith*. Chapters XIV to XIX describe his early country practice. Compare the experiences of the real and the fictitious doctor. Discuss other country doctors to be found in fiction.

5. To see the great strides made during our century in the handling of public health, read Paul de Kruif's *The Fight for Life*. An informal debate on the question of socialized medicine would be of interest and value to the class.

6. If you are considering medicine as a career, you may want to read others of the many "doctor" books published since 1935: Victor Heiser's *An American Doctor's Odyssey* (forty-five countries); W. N. Macartney's *Fifty Years a Country Doctor* (New York); E. V. McComb's *Doctor of the North Country* (Wisconsin); R. T. Morris's *Fifty Years a Surgeon*; Rosalie Morton's *Woman Surgeon*; J. B. Wheeler's *Memoirs of a Small Town Surgeon* (Vermont); J. A. Jerger's *Doctor—Here's Your Hat* (Iowa); U. C. Coe's *Frontier Doctor* (Oregon); L. Davis's *J. B. Murphy, Stormy Petrel of Surgery* (Chicago).

### FOR FURTHER READING OF BIOGRAPHY

References given within the sections are not here repeated. For lives of authors and statesmen represented in the table of contents, see study suggestions following their selections. In the first list the name of the subject of the biography is given in black-face type.

#### FAMOUS MEN AND WOMEN OF THE PAST

**Agassiz:** Robinson, M. L., *Runner of the Mountaintops*, Louis Agassiz

**Alcott:** Cheney, E. D., *Life and Letters of Louisa M. Alcott*

**Audubon:** Muschamp, E. A., *Audacious Audubon*. Peattie, D. C., *Singing in the Wilderness*. Rourke, Constance, *Audubon*

**Barton:** Epler, E. P., *Life of Clara Barton*

**Bell:** Mackenzie, Catherine, *Alexander Graham Bell*

**Bok:** Bok, E. W., *The Americanization of Edward Bok*

**Boone:** Lives of Daniel Boone by John Bakeless, Flora Seymour, and S. E. White



- Burroughs: Barrus, Clara, *John Burroughs, Boy and Man*. Sharp, D. L., *A Boy's Life of John Burroughs*
- Cody ("Buffalo Bill"): Cody, W. F., *Autobiography of Buffalo Bill*
- Custer: Custer, Mrs. E. B., *Boots and Saddles*
- Edison: Meadowcroft, W. H., *A Boy's Life of Edison*
- Grant: Grant, U. S., *Personal Memoirs*. Hill, F. T., *On the Trail of Grant and Lee*. Nicolay, Helen, *The Boy's Life of Ulysses S. Grant*
- Hudson: Powys, Llewelyn, *Henry Hudson*
- Jackson: James, Marquis, *Andrew Jackson*
- Jackson: Odell, Ruth, *Helen Hunt Jackson*
- Jefferson: Jefferson, Joseph, *Autobiography*
- Jones: Russell, Phillips, *John Paul Jones, Man of Action*
- Kemble: Armstrong, Margaret, *Fanny Kemble*
- Lyon: Gilchrist, B. B., *Life of Mary Lyon*
- Muir: Muir, John, *The Story of My Boyhood and Youth*. Young, S. H., *With Muir in Alaska*
- Page: Hendrick, B. J., *Life and Letters of Walter H. Page; The Training of an American* (Page's youth)
- Palmer: Palmer, G. H., *The Life of Alice Freeman Palmer*
- Riis: Riis, Jacob, *The Making of an American*
- Sherman: Lewis, Lloyd, *Sherman, Fighting Prophet*
- Skinner: Skinner, Otis, *Footlights and Spotlights*
- Sothorn: Sothorn, E. H., *The Melancholy Tale of Me*
- Washington: Washington, B. T., *Up from Slavery*
- Wiggin: Wiggin, K. D., *My Garden of Memory*
- Wright, Orville and Wilbur: Charnley, M. V., *A Boy's Life of the Wright Brothers*. McMahon, J. R., *The Wright Brothers*

INTERESTING PERSONALITIES OF MODERN LIFE  
(For autobiographies by doctors, see page 451.)

- Adamic, Louis, *My America*
- Addams, Jane, *Twenty Years at Hull House; Second Twenty Years at Hull House*. Also Wise, W. E., *Jane Addams of Hull House*
- Ashford, B. K., *A Soldier in Science*
- Byrd, R. E., *Skyward; Alone*
- Chase, M. E., *A Goodly Heritage; A Goodly Fellowship*
- Cornell, Katherine, *I Wanted to Be an Actress*
- Earhart, Amelia: Putnam, G. B., *Soaring Wings*
- Ferber, Edna, *A Peculiar Treasure*
- Field, Isobel, *This Life I've Loved*
- Keller, Helen, *The Story of My Life*
- Le Gallienne, Eva, *At 33*
- Lindbergh, C. A., *We*. Also Keyhoe, D. E., *Flying with Lindbergh*
- Longworth, A. R., *Crowded Hours*
- Mencken, H. L., *Happy Days*

Parker, Carleton: Parker, C. S., *An American Idyl*  
Partridge, Bellamy, *Country Lawyer*  
Phelps, W. L., *Autobiography with Letters*  
Rinehart, M. R., *My Story*  
Roosevelt, Eleanor, *This Is My Story*  
Sheehan, Vincent, *Personal History*  
Smith, A. E.: Hapgood, Norman, and Moskowitz, Henry, *Up from the City Streets*  
Tarbell, Ida, *All in the Day's Work*  
Ueland, Brenda, *Me*  
Untermeyer, Louis, *From Another World*  
Wald, Lillian, *The House on Henry Street; Windows of Henry Street*  
Waln, Nora, *House of Exile; Reaching for the Stars*

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Beard, A. E. S., *Our Foreign-Born Citizens*  
Bradford, Gamaliel, *Confederate Portraits; Union Portraits; American Portraits; Damaged Souls*  
Bridges, T. C., and Tiltman, H. H., *Heroes of Modern Adventure*  
Eastman, Fred, *Men of Power*  
Fields, J. T., *Yesterdays with Authors*  
French, J. L., *Pioneers All*  
Guinagh, Kevin, *Inspired Amateurs*  
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Hubbard, Elbert, *Little Journeys to the Homes of American Statesmen*;  
others of the "Little Journeys" series  
Husband, Joseph, *Americans by Adoption*  
Hyde, Marietta, *Modern Biography*  
Law, F. H., *Modern Great Americans*  
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Parkman, M. R., *Fighters for Peace; Heroes of Today*  
Seitz, D. C., *Uncommon Americans*





## POETRY

POETRY is fairly easy to recognize but next to impossible to define. Even such good definition makers as encyclopedias admit the difficulty; one of them opens a long sentence full of abstract words with the apology, "Without attempting to define poetry —" The poets themselves (who should know, if anybody does) have tried to express this unexplainable quality of poetry. One says, "Poetry is the opening and closing of a door, leaving those who look through to guess what is seen during a moment." (Carl Sandburg) Another puts it this way, "Poetry is a language that tells us, through a more or less emotional reaction, something that cannot be said." (Edwin Arlington Robinson) Indefinable as poetry may be, it has elements that are commonly recognized. The first is the stirring of our emotions. "The right reader of a good poem can tell the moment it strikes him that he has taken an immortal wound — that he will never get over it." (Robert Frost) And again, "If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can ever warm me, I know that it is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that it is poetry. These are the only ways I know it. Are there any other ways?" (Emily Dickinson) These two statements sound rather appalling, but what the poets meant was that poetry in its best sense is something intensely personal and definitely individual. Even more than the short story, the essay, and biography, poetry is not just a type of literature but also a frame of mind, a point of view, a scent in the air, a fleeting memory, a hidden force of nature which, like electricity, flashes into light when given the right contacts. If something is poetry to you, it sends an invigorating current

through your blood; if it leaves you unmoved, it is not poetry to you. One essence of poetry, then, is emotional appeal.

What stimulates the emotions? So far as poetry is concerned it is largely the imagination. The poet may start out with the rough clay of ordinary things seen every day; but before he has finished molding it, mental vision has far outstripped the merely physical. He has touched the imagination. With the magic spell of words he has clothed an idea with beauty. To realize this we need only take some poem that really moves us, state the idea in plain prose, and compare the two. Shorn of its wings, the prose version simply confronts us with a fact or a principle; it has lost its power to thrill or sway or uplift us.

Now since most of us, however much capacity we may have for responding to beauty, can only express ourselves in plain prose and probably have difficulty even with that, the poet performs a real service for us by releasing into adequate words vague ideas and emotions that have seethed within us. For the moment we are saying those words from our own hearts, from our own experience. We are "mute, inglorious Miltons" suddenly given a voice. It is the sense of identification with the poet, as well as the mere pleasing sound of the words, which often makes us want to memorize a poem in order that we may in the fullest sense "possess" it.

But in addition to this release which the poet brings us, he may also lead us to new perceptions, new feelings of which we had not even been aware. The observations of our eyes are directed by the interests of our minds. Two persons walking together down a street may be noticing entirely different details, according to their mental slant. Now the poet lends us his eyes or his ears to enable us to sense things previously unnoticed — new tints brought by the rain, overtones heard above the city's traffic, a fleeting expression on a human face. Or in the world of thought he leads us to new perceptions of human values or new interpretations of divine power. A great poet not only creates poems; he may also create new people out of his readers. His imagination has been made manifold.

Granting that emotion and the imagination are two of the essentials to poetry, what more is there? Besides mere words, how does the poet secure the final effect that he desires? Again a direct answer eludes us, but we may say that without *rhythm* there can be no poetry. In a general way we all know what the word means. Its Greek original meant "measured motion," and in English poetry this is to a large extent produced by the more or less regular recurrence of

accented and unaccented syllables. Ideas expressed in rhythmical language that stimulates the imagination and stirs the emotions constitute the essentials of poetry.

## *Poetry in America*

STYLES come and go in poems as well as in clothes. It is curious to see how poetry began in our country, how it has changed and developed. Some ages have had a great wave of poetry; others have marked the ebb, when little was being produced, but power was gathering for a new wave.

**Colonial period barren of poetry.** It was almost two hundred years after the landing of the Pilgrims before a really fine poem was produced on this side of the Atlantic. There had been much writing of verse, but it lacked the magic touch which transforms mere rhyming into poetry. In 1640 the colonists had turned the Psalms into metrical form for singing in their services. Michael Wigglesworth had versified the Puritan conception of the Last Judgment in a long monotonous poem, *The Day of Doom*, which was in its own time a "best seller." Poets of the late colonial and Revolutionary periods attempted ambitious poetic dramas or great epic poems modeled upon the style of their English predecessors. Everything was ponderous and imitative. The Revolution called forth some mediocre songs, ballads, and satires on the British.

**Early New England poets the first important group.** With the coming of William Cullen Bryant the first great wave of poetry began to roll in. Upon its crest rode Longfellow, Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell, poets you have undoubtedly known since childhood. Even Emerson and Thoreau, whose greatest messages were given in prose, contributed their share in metrical form, while innumerable minor poets sent their songs upon the air.

Most of these men were still to a great extent imitative of Europe in spite of the fact that they used American themes. Longfellow perpetuated the legends of the Indians and the early settlers, but his *Song of Hiawatha* was modeled upon the style of the Finnish epic, the *Kalevala*, and most of his narrative poems resemble the manner of

Old World metrical tales. Whittier took some of his inspiration from the Scotch Burns and is often compared with him in his simple pictures of rural life. Lowell and Holmes smack of the library and the gentlemanly ease of cultivated backgrounds even in picturing the New England rustic. All these men were poets of distinct talent whose contributions have become a part of our American inheritance. You will study them in greater detail in this section, so that little need be said about them here. For pure originality these sturdy New Englanders were outstripped by two others of the same general period — Poe and Whitman.

**Poe a great original genius.** Poe himself lived more vitally in the land of imagination than in the land of reality, where he was constantly failing to adapt himself to the demands of his environment. Consequently he was able to lift his readers with him into this dream world where pure poetry seemed enthroned. There is magic in his lines; and though he has given us the exact recipe for his incantations when he tells us how he built his poems, they remain magic just the same. In his work as literary critic on various magazines, Poe had occasion to review the writings of other poets. Unfortunately he involved himself in violent controversy, especially against the firmly intrenched New England group. His greatest quarrel with these poets was on their moralizing, which he believed should have no place in poetry. "The immediate object of poetry is pleasure, not truth." Poetry is "the rhythmical creation of beauty." Humor is "antagonistical to that which is the soul of the muse proper." Sadness he declared the most poetic mood and the death of a beautiful woman the most perfect theme. Metrical imperfections called forth his scorn, as did a trite or empty word. Many of his criticisms of contemporaries were deserved; many seemed unduly harsh. At least, however, Poe practiced what he preached and gave us a slender but technically unexcelled body of poetry which places him in the front rank of American poets.

**Whitman's originality and realism.** Whitman outdid even Poe in originality, for his poetry owes almost nothing to books, although he was not ignorant of them. Like a mighty prophet of old, he poured forth his torrent of powerful words, seizing for his material everything about him — himself, other men, the open road, the teeming city, the frightful war hospitals (where he was a nurse), a spider, the stars, Abraham Lincoln — whatever came into his ken. Poe removes us into a land that never was; Whitman plunges us into a land that most vitally is. Many find it hard to realize that Whitman was the con-

temporary of the New England poets because he seems so much more modern. Whitman's face was set toward the future instead of the past, and his own generation failed for many years to appreciate him. But his fame and influence have been steadily on the increase, and many poets of the present day look directly to him as the pioneer who opened up new realms of poetry.

**Whitman employs free verse.** Whitman was the great emancipator of the form as well as the spirit of poetry. He it was who first cast aside the regular metrical forms for those larger untrammelled rhythms known as *free verse*. To many ears this was not poetry at all, but prose printed in lines of varying length. The difference, however, between this poetry and ordinary prose can be felt after one has lived with it a while. The emotional quality, the repetition and assonance (similarity of sound, but not rhyme), the imaginative perceptions, all give the tone of a rhythmic chant. Whitman's verse by no means lacks large, free, though loosely patterned rhythms. Strange to say, Whitman had no noteworthy disciples during his lifetime. It was not until almost twenty years after his death that free verse came into its own, and after a considerable fight for life succeeded in establishing itself as a recognized sister of metrical verse.

**The poets and the War between the States.** To return to the period of the War between the States, one may well ask what effect that great struggle had upon the poetry of the land. Did it produce great poets and great poems? Of course there was the usual crop of war songs, which will undoubtedly go ringing on through time long after the last vestige of feeling between the two sides has been wiped out. Many of these could almost be classed as folk songs were it not that an author's name is attached to them, but the writers themselves are of no importance in the history of our poetry. No one today remembers the names of the writers of "Dixie," "Maryland, My Maryland," "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground," "The Battle Cry of Freedom," and many others. One song alone is always associated with its author, perhaps because of the unusual fact that she was a woman. This is "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" by Julia Ward Howe. At the close of the conflict came that touchingly beautiful attempt to heal the wounds of war, "The Blue and the Gray," a poem by Francis M. Finch. Of course the New England poets wrote freely about the war, especially the critical situations leading up to it. Whittier's antislavery poems and Lowell's *Biglow Papers*, "The Present Crisis," and "Commemoration Ode" form an intimate part of the history of the great struggle.



As for soldier-poets, men who were under fire and at the same time had the fire of poetry burning in their bosoms, there is only one — a Southerner, Sidney Lanier. Nor would anyone call him a war poet, for whatever impress his painful experiences as soldier, prisoner, and refugee may have left on his memory, they left none on his poetry. Musician par excellence, and lover of beauty, of nature, of old legends, and of noble character, he turned his back completely on the nightmare of his early days. Only slight reflection of the war is given by Timrod and Hayne, also Southerners, who as war correspondent or aide-de-camp had intimate contacts with the action of the armies. On the Northern side there is no one, though Whitman, the war nurse, has given us more than anyone else a taste of what war means.

Years following the War between the States meager in poetry. After the war the first great wave of poetry had broken and there was a long rolling-back of the waters preparatory to another onslaught. The old poets were still writing in their last years, but no new ones seemed ready to take their places. Lanier flashed brilliantly for only a few years before death took him off. Emily Dickinson was as yet undiscovered; and her poems seem to belong to our century, when they were published, rather than to the nineteenth, when she was secretly writing them. The young Eastern poets of the time were writing sentimental, insignificant verse.

The West and Middle West come into poetry. Meanwhile things were beginning to happen in the West. Not only was romance being lived; it was also being recorded. Bret Harte, whose greater work was in fiction, began to picture in lively verse the miner, the cardsharper, the claim jumper, and others of the motley crew pouring into the Western states. Edward Rowland Sill, with his Eastern background, contributed a more polished note, mingled with Western frankness. Joaquin Miller splashed in flamboyant colors the great panorama of the plains and the sierras.

Then the Middle West made itself heard in James Whitcomb Riley, transcribing Hoosier farm dialect, and Eugene Field, combining newspaper light verse, tender lullabies, and Western dialect poems. In the last decade of the nineteenth century came two young innovators, Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey, who in their successive *Songs from Vagabondia*, running over a period of six years, turned poetry out of doors to roam over the hills and escape the conventionalities of civilization. Just at the end of the century Edwin Markham harnessed poetry to the cause of social justice in "The Man with the

Hoe" and thereby opened up the whole field of industrial life as a theme for poetry.

Then for the first decade of the twentieth century poetry seemed to reach its lowest ebb. There simply was no poetry to speak of. But the waters were gathering for the second great wave of poetry, which broke upon America in the second decade of the twentieth century.

Twentieth century brings "the new poetry." In 1912 there was established a little magazine of verse called *Poetry*. Hitherto unknown poets found encouragement between its covers. Strange kinds of poetry were fostered and began to develop. In the next few years volume after volume of poetry appeared on the market and, what was more, found a sale. "The new poetry" became a topic of general conversation, like the weather and baseball. People had a hard time deciding whether the new poetry *was* poetry, and then whether or not they liked it. But upon all this controversy the new poetry thrived, and now it seems neither new nor startling — just part of our heritage of poetry, just the voice of our modern America speaking to us. Those poets who less than thirty years ago seemed dangerous revolutionists are now our accepted and established artists.

It is hard to know which of these new poets to put first in point of time. The very fact that Masters, Robinson, Amy Lowell, Frost, Sandburg, and Lindsay broke almost simultaneously upon the shore of poetry added to the effectiveness of all of them. In the five years between 1912 and our entrance into the World War in 1917, each of them had published a significant volume which set the pace for what was to follow. Each of the six has his own clearly marked individuality. Robinson and Frost hold to traditional verse forms but picture a new New England with startling insight.

**The Imagists wield influence.** Amy Lowell pioneered in new verse forms and allied herself with the Imagists, a band of Englishmen and Americans who had distinct theories of poetry. Since the six tenets of the Imagists have had such widespread influence upon modern poetry and really sum up many of the important differences between nineteenth- and twentieth-century poetry even in the latter's more conservative forms, it is well to quote their creed:

1. To use the language of common speech; to employ always the *exact* word, not the merely decorative word.
2. To create new rhythms as the expression of new moods. We do not insist upon "free verse" as the only method of writing poetry. . . . We

do believe that the individuality of a poet may often be better expressed in free verse than in conventional forms.

3. To allow absolute freedom in the choice of subject.

4. To present an image [hence the name "Imagist"]. We are not a school of painters; but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous.

5. To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred or indefinite.

6. Finally, most of us believe that concentration is the very essence of poetry.

Many of these principles are illustrated also by Masters and Sandburg, both Illinois poets, who have made effective use of free verse, the crisp figure, startling epithet, and the unlimited selection of subject matter in their interpretations of the town, the city, and the plain. Lindsay, also a native of Illinois, is entirely different in his method, using a highly marked rhythm and numerous unusual devices to produce an intensely emotional musical effect.

These six were the most distinguished of our older poets of the present century. Three of them have died in recent years.

**Important contemporaries.** Among the great number of excellent contemporary singers only a few others have been chosen to be represented here. Of epic proportions is Stephen Vincent Benét's *John Brown's Body*, which does for the War between the States what no contemporary of the war period was able to do — gives us a stupendous picture of the whole struggle from North to South, from home to battlefield. Louis Untermeyer not only writes verse of pronounced merit, but has done more than any other poet to advance and interpret the work of others. Among the many women poets, Sara Teasdale and Elinor Wylie had unusual lyric gift, while Edna St. Vincent Millay is easily the greatest living woman poet today.

In the twentieth century American poetry has been enriched by the contributions of outstanding Negro poets: James Weldon Johnson, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen — to cite the leaders.

In recent years the names of Archibald MacLeish in the East and Robinson Jeffers in the West have come to the front in American poetry. Each shows genuine creative insight, and each has a marked style of his own. Mr. MacLeish has done signal work in adapting poetic drama to the technique of the radio play, and thus has opened up possibilities of new worlds to be conquered by the Muse of Poetry.

## *Guide to the Study of Poetry*

Though poetry is almost impossible to define satisfactorily, its elements are neither numerous nor difficult to identify. You can never take a poem apart and tell exactly what makes its splendid total effect, but you can greatly increase your enjoyment if you understand something about the poet's art. *What* the poet has to tell you will be either thought or imagery, often a mingling of both. *How* he tells it accounts for the music of the poem. Blending of the thought and imagery and music creates the *mood*, or general emotional effect, which is often the very soul of poetry.<sup>1</sup>

**Thought and imagery.** To identify the general subject of a poem is a mere fraction of grasping its thought. Think of the thousands of poems that have been written about nature, death, or love. You must go farther and discover just what the poet has to say about the subject. You have probably had experience in writing a précis, or one-sentence summary of the central thought of a poem. Reducing a thought from its sparkling expression in poetry to a simple statement in everyday language may destroy much of its beauty or force, but the process will also give you a clear understanding of the thought so that the poet's own words will mean more to you. Moreover, once the thought is in simple terms, you can readily tell whether it owes its value to being a genuinely new idea or to being a fine expression of a common human experience or of a lasting truth.

Only a part of the thought of a poem is actually expressed. What a poem never says but makes you think for yourself is often even more interesting. Read "Richard Cory," on page 611, to see how much material for thought a poem can give you, even when all that it *says* is immediately clear.

But in what the poet does express, he shows that his senses are unusually keen. He not only sees, feels, or hears in a certain way at a given moment, but he also remembers other experiences of seeing, feeling, or hearing that have something in common with this experience. By bringing the immediate and the indirect experiences together in an unexpected phrase, he has made us also have a richer experience and a fuller grasp of what he was trying to tell us. This

<sup>1</sup> Definitions of types of poetry, meters, and common figures of speech appear for reference at the end of this section, page 710.

power to report what he sees and hears so that his words carry the impression vividly to another is called *imagery*. Imagery stimulates our imagination to recreate the impression the poet caught. You can turn through the pages of poetry in this book, just dipping in here and there, never reading a whole poem, and soon find many of these vivid, short word pictures that have a charm all their own.

**The music of poetry.** The music of poetry, like all other music, is created by rhythm and melody, often combined in a repeated pattern.

The original Greek word from which we get the term *rhythm* meant "measured motion." In English poetry, rhythm is the feeling of movement created by the pattern of light and heavy syllables in the line, the alternation of one or several unaccented syllables with the accented ones. The more light syllables between accents, the faster the line seems to run. A skillful poet takes advantage of this means of varying the music of his lines to fit his thought or mood. So Bryant begins his solemn "Thanatopsis"

To him, who in the love of Nature holds  
Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
A various language.

But Holmes, writing a gay song for a class reunion, sweeps along with

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?  
If there has, take him out, without making a noise.

Remember that a rigid rhythm is as deadly dull in poetry as in the music of a mechanical piano. A good poet will vary the pattern of syllables and give his rhythm life. As you read poetry aloud, be careful not to make all the words in a line fall into the jog-trot pattern ridiculed in

You'd *scarce expect* one of my age  
To *speak* in *public* on the stage.

When you catch yourself bearing down hard on a preposition like *of* or *on*, you are probably butchering the rhythm the poet created. True rhythm emphasizes, rather than confuses, the meaning of the lines.

Most of the melody in poetry, as in music, is created by skillful repetition of sounds — *refrain*, *rhyme*, *alliteration*, and *assonance*. You already know *refrain*, the repetition of whole phrases, and *rhyme*,

the repetition of the end sounds of words at fixed intervals, usually at the ends of lines. You probably know *alliteration*, the repetition of the initial sounds of words, for it is a great favorite used in nursery rhymes like "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers," and in advertising slogans, as well as in fine poetry where the repetitions are less obvious. More subtle but more important in setting the tone of melody is *assonance*, the repetition of vowel sounds. In Poe's poem "The Bells" we have really an exercise in assonance and melody as the poet piles up repeated vowel sounds in each stanza not only to suggest the tone of each kind of bell, but also to suggest the mood associated with it. In any poem that has rich melody you will find not one but several of these melodic repetitions.

Pattern in poetry is based on rhythm, rhyme scheme, line length, and the number of lines in a stanza. Individual patterns, like the sonnet, can best be learned as you come to examples of them, but some of the terms used in describing patterns will be useful all through your study of poetry. The simplest and shortest stanza is the *couplet*, two lines rhyming together. The most common is the *quatrain*, of four lines. It may rhyme in many different ways, but usually in couplets or in the alternate rhyme, with a line skipped between the rhymed words. Skip through the pages of poetry following, looking at the quatrains, and you will soon see that different combinations of line lengths, rhythms, and rhyme schemes make possible a great variety in this simple verse form. One pattern that you should learn early to identify is *blank verse*, the fine unrhymed form in which most long English poems are written. It must not be confused with *free verse*, which follows no regular pattern, for blank verse follows two requirements of pattern — a regular line length of five accents, and a rhythm pattern of alternate light and heavy syllables, making up the line called *iambic pentameter*. Look at the blank verse on pages 468 and 487 and then at the free verse on pages 555 and 617 to see how a mere glance will often reveal the difference between these two forms.

These terms are given not because they are of great importance in themselves, but because it is easier to talk about poetry if you have them at your command, just as it is easier to talk to a mechanic about repairs on an automobile if you know what to call the various mechanisms under the hood.

**Mood in poetry.** Every poem has a mood, an emotional tone, or perhaps a series of changing moods. Mood is closely related to thought, but thought alone can seldom create the strong emotional

effect that can be achieved by harmonious use of several of the elements of poetry. Imagery is of great importance in mood, not only for the pictures the poet presents, but also for the comparisons he uses. A scarlet tulip may look like a carnival balloon or like a "thin, clear bubble of blood," according to the mood of the observer. Even single words have their own emotional connotation, or suggested associations, so that you can run through a poem and pick out the words that help to build up the dominant feeling. Assonance can have a great share in building up mood, for some vowel sounds are light and gay, while others are harsh and still others are melancholy. Poe claims that he deliberately used a great number of long o's in "The Raven" because he considered that the most mournful sound in human speech. Rhythm, too, contributes to the general emotional effect, for in general the slow, steady rhythms are most harmonious with serious or solemn thought, while the rapid ones lend themselves to lighter moods, though a faster, swinging rhythm is sometimes used to give greater intensity and vigor to serious moods. In any poem with a strong mood, you can soon discover which of these means the poet uses to get his effect.

**The poet's individuality.** As in other literary types, style is a good key to the author's individuality. The qualities of style that you have noticed in prose are just as marked in poetry — the writer's choice of words, his personal or impersonal tone, his dignity, or his humor. You will find that some poets like to invert the order of their sentences to gain greater emphasis or to bring the right word out at the end of the line for rhyme, while others, particularly in recent years, keep the natural order of simple speech. Similarly, some poets have a fondness for unusual and picturesque words, while others, chiefly among the moderns, favor simplicity in diction. Add what you can observe of a poet's style to his favorite subjects and ideas, his tendency to excel in imagery or melody or rhythm, and his favorite patterns, and you will be able to sum up the poet for yourself without depending on the critics and historians to tell you what to think and say about him.

*Northern Poets*

## WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878)

Fate played strange tricks with William Cullen Bryant. Born and bred in New England, he nevertheless spent two-thirds of his life in New York City. The portrait of Bryant best known to students of poetry shows him as a white-bearded patriarch, although the poems which entitle him to be called our first great American poet were all written before he was thirty-eight. A lover of the woods and the flowers, and by nature a meditative recluse, Bryant spent most of his life in the turmoil of a newspaper office. While still in his teens he made his reputation by "Thanatopsis," a melancholy poem on death, and then lived to the good old age of eighty-four.

When Bryant was seventeen years old he passed through a period of deep discouragement because of the failure of his plans to go to Yale. In this mood he read many of the English poems of melancholy popular at the time. Perhaps his mood was heightened by his own rather poor health and the fact that there was tuberculosis in the family. Under these circumstances he wrote "Thanatopsis." Six years later, in 1817, his father found the poem in a desk and submitted it to the *North American Review*. One of the editors said, "No one on this side of the Atlantic is capable of writing such verses," but when the authorship was verified the poem was published. In 1825, in Bryant's first volume of poems, "Thanatopsis" appeared in the version that follows.

## THANATOPSIS

To him who in the love of Nature holds  
 Communion with her visible forms, she speaks  
 A various language; for his gayer hours  
 She has a voice of gladness, and a smile  
 And eloquence of beauty, and she glides 5  
 Into his darker musings, with a mild  
 And healing sympathy, that steals away  
 Their sharpness, ere he is aware. When thoughts  
 Of the last bitter hour come like a blight  
 Over thy spirit, and sad images 10  
 Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,  
 And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,  
 Make thee to shudder and grow sick at heart; —  
 Go forth, under the open sky, and list



To Nature's teachings, while from all around — 15  
 Earth and her waters, and the depths of air —  
 Comes a still voice. —

Yet a few days, and thee  
 The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
 In all his course; nor yet in the cold ground,  
 Where thy pale form was laid, with many tears, 20  
 Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist  
 Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim  
 Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again,  
 And, lost each human trace, surrendering up  
 Thine individual being, shalt thou go 25  
 To mix forever with the elements,  
 To be a brother to the insensible rock  
 And to the sluggish clod, which the rude swain  
 Turns with his share, and treads upon. The oak  
 Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mold. 30

Yet not to thine eternal resting place  
 Shalt thou retire alone, nor couldst thou wish  
 Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down  
 With patriarchs of the infant world — with kings,  
 The powerful of the earth — the wise, the good, 35  
 Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,  
 All in one mighty sepulcher. The hills  
 Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun — the vales  
 Stretching in pensive quietness between;  
 The venerable woods — rivers that move 40  
 In majesty, and the complaining brooks  
 That make the meadows green; and, poured round all,  
 Old Ocean's gray and melancholy waste, —  
 Are but the solemn decorations all  
 Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun, 45  
 The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,  
 Are shining on the sad abodes of death,  
 Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread  
 The globe are but a handful to the tribes  
 That slumber in its bosom. — Take the wings 50  
 Of morning, pierce the Barcan wilderness,

17 Yet a few days: This was the opening of the original poem. 51. Barcan: pertaining to Barca, a district in North Africa on the Mediterranean coast.

Or lose thyself in the continuous woods  
 Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound,  
 Save his own dashings — yet the dead are there;  
 And millions in those solitudes, since first 55  
 The flight of years began, have laid them down  
 In their last sleep — the dead reign there alone.  
 So shalt thou rest, and what if thou withdraw  
 In silence from the living, and no friend  
 Take note of thy departure? . All that breathe 60  
 Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh  
 When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care  
 Plod on, and each one as before will chase  
 His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave  
 Their mirth and their employments, and shall come 65  
 And make their bed with thee. As the long train  
 Of ages glides away, the sons of men,  
 The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes  
 In the full strength of years, matron and maid,  
 The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man — 70  
 Shall one by one be gathered to thy side,  
 By those who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join  
 The innumerable caravan, which moves  
 To that mysterious realm, where each shall take 75  
 His chamber in the silent halls of death,  
 Thou go not, like the quarry slave at night,  
 Scourged to his dungeon, but, sustained and soothed  
 By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave,  
 Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch 80  
 About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

53. *Oregon*: now known as the Columbia River in Oregon. 66. *And make their bed with thee*: This was the end of the original poem.

## TO A WATERFOWL

When Bryant as a young man was licensed to practice law, he was confronted by the problem of where to open his office. One December day while tramping over the hills to consider the town of Plainfield, Massachusetts, he felt particularly depressed by the uncertainty of his future. As his biographer, John Bigelow, describes it, "The sun had already set,

leaving behind it one of those brilliant seas of chrysolite and opal which often flood the New England skies, and while pausing to contemplate the rosy splendor with rapt adoration, a solitary bird made its winged way along the illuminated horizon. He watched the lone wanderer until it was lost in the distance. He then went on with new strength and courage. When he reached the house where he was to stop for the night, he immediately sat down and wrote the lines 'To a Waterfowl,' the concluding verse of which will perpetuate to future ages the lesson on faith which the scene had impressed upon him."

Whither, midst falling dew,  
While glow the heavens with the last steps of day,  
Far, through their rosy depths, dost thou pursue  
Thy solitary way?

Vainly the fowler's eye  
Might mark thy distant flight to do thee wrong,  
As, darkly seen against the crimson sky,  
Thy figure floats along. 5

Seek'st thou the plashy brink  
Of weedy lake, or marge of river wide, 10  
Or where the rocking billows rise and sink  
On the chafed oceanside?

There is a Power whose care  
Teaches thy way along the pathless coast —  
The desert and illimitable air — 15  
Lone wandering, but not lost.

All day thy wings have fanned,  
At that far height, the cold, thin atmosphere,  
Yet stoop not, weary, to the welcome land,  
Though the dark night is near. 20

And soon that toil shall end;  
Soon shalt thou find a summer home, and rest,  
And scream among thy fellows; reeds shall bend,  
Soon, o'er thy sheltered nest.

Thou'rt gone, the abyss of heaven 25  
Hath swallowed up thy form; yet, on my heart  
Deeply hath sunk the lesson thou hast given,  
And shall not soon depart.

He who, from zone to zone,  
Guides through the boundless sky thy certain flight, 30  
In the long way that I must tread alone,  
Will lead my steps aright.

## THE BATTLEFIELD

Bryant's early poems were about evenly divided in subject matter between death and nature, but some of his later poems, written after his more energetic life in New York had begun, present a stirring challenge and show the fine Puritan spirit which was his inheritance. The first line in the ninth stanza has become almost a proverb through frequent quoting.

Once this soft turf, this rivulet's sands,  
Were trampled by a hurrying crowd,  
And fiery hearts and armed hands  
Encountered in the battle cloud.

Ah! never shall the land forget 5  
How gushed the lifeblood of her brave —  
Gushed, warm with hope and valor yet,  
Upon the soil they fought to save.

Now all is calm, and fresh, and still;  
Alone the chirp of flitting bird, 10  
And talk of children on the hill,  
And bell of wandering kine, are heard.

No solemn host goes trailing by  
The black-mouthed gun and staggering wain;  
Men start not at the battle cry, 15  
Oh, be it never heard again!

Soon rested those who fought; but thou  
Who minglest in the harder strife  
For truths which men receive not now,  
Thy warfare only ends with life. 20

A friendless warfare! lingering long  
Through weary day and weary year,  
A wild and many-weaponed throng  
Hang on thy front, and flank, and rear.

Yet nerve thy spirit to the proof, 25  
 And blench not at thy chosen lot.  
 The timid good may stand aloof,  
 The sage may frown — yet faint thou not.

Nor heed the shaft too surely cast,  
 The foul and hissing bolt of scorn; 30  
 For with thy side shall dwell, at last,  
 The victory of endurance born.

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again;  
 Th' eternal years of God are hers;  
 But Error, wounded, writhes in pain, 35  
 And dies among his worshipers.

Yea, though thou lie upon the dust,  
 When those who helped thee flee in fear,  
 Die full of hope and manly trust,  
 Like those who fell in battle here. 40

Another hand thy sword shall wield,  
 Another hand the standard wave,  
 Till from the trumpet's mouth is pealed  
 The blast of triumph o'er thy grave.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

##### *Thanatopsis*

1. According to the first stanza, what different messages does nature have for us? Give some specific examples from your own experience of how nature has affected your mood.

2. Contrast the two views of death in lines 17-30 and 31-72. Does the idea of the companionship of the dead seem consoling to you? In what spirit does the poet think one should approach death?

3. Does this poem express belief in a life after death? Read carefully before answering; there has been considerable difference of opinion on this point.

4. Vocabulary: pall (11), patriarchs (34), hoary seers (36), sepulcher (37), venerable (40), scourged (78).

*To a Waterfowl*

5. Point out the stanzas containing each of the three parts of the poem: the picture seen by the poet, his meditation about the bird, his application to his own life.

6. In view of the circumstances under which the poem was written do you like or dislike the "moral tag"?

7. Vocabulary: plashy (9), marge (10), illimitable (15), abyss (25).

*The Battle-field*

8. What two kinds of battle are contrasted?

9. In what way does this poem reflect the life of a man engaged in public affairs? List the different kinds of persons who may oppose him. What consolation does the poem offer a person who may be defeated in a righteous cause?

10. Vocabulary: wain (14), blench (26).

*For Your Vocabulary*

11. A number of the words that describe slight movements have special emotional connotations that make them valuable in poetry. *Writhe* (page 472), which Bryant uses, has special associations with pain. *Writhing* is a violent twisting caused by anguish of mind or body. *Undulate*, based on a word for *wave*, means to rise and fall as waves do, and has associations of natural rhythms and of peacefulness. Irving used the original sense when he spoke of the *undulating* billows on the sea. London described the *undulations* of snow drifted deep over ice jams.

*For Ambitious Students*

12. It is interesting to compare "To a Waterfowl" with "To a Mouse" by Robert Burns. Each poet comments on his own future, but with how different a note!

13. What similarity can you find between the spirit of "The Battle-field" and that of Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" (see page 1052)?

14. If you are especially interested in nature poetry, now is a good time to start making a collection of some poems you especially like, for Bryant affords many examples. Perhaps you would like to specialize on bird or flower poetry. Some students have even been interested in collecting poems on death.

## RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

For biographical details, see page 275.

You have already met Emerson as an essayist, a transcendentalist, and a prophet. You will not be surprised, then, on meeting him as a poet to find him philosophizing in meter rather than creating moods or pictures as poets usually do. Some critics have even said that most of his poetry was not poetry at all; but on the other hand a few of his best-known pieces *could not be sacrificed from our national literature*. "The Concord Hymn," the most complete and faultless of his poems according to Oliver Wendell Holmes, was written for the dedication on July 4, 1837, of the monument to the minutemen of the Battle of Concord, which opened the American Revolution. Remember that Emerson's grandfather, a minister of that town, had watched the battle from the Old Manse, only a stone's throw from the bridge (the same Old Manse which Hawthorne later celebrated). Today the minuteman may be seen through a leafy vista on the far side of the new stone arch which has replaced the original bridge of rough wood. On the base of the statue is inscribed the first stanza of the poem.

## THE CONCORD HYMN

By the rude bridge that arched the flood,  
 Their flag to April's breeze unfurled,  
 Here once the embattled farmers stood,  
 And fired the shot heard round the world.

The foe long since in silence slept; 5  
 Alike the conqueror silent sleeps;  
 And Time the ruined bridge has swept  
 Down the dark stream which seaward creeps.

On this green bank, by this soft stream,  
 We set today a votive stone; 10  
 That memory may their deed redeem,  
 When, like our sires, our sons are gone.

Spirit, that made those heroes dare  
 To die and leave their children free,  
 Bid Time and Nature gently spare 15  
 The shaft we raise to them and thee.

## THE RHODORA

ON BEING ASKED, WHENCE IS THE FLOWER?

In his essay on "Nature" Emerson says that the "love of Beauty" is one of the nobler wants of man. While the beauty of nature and its form delights the eye, the appreciation of beauty is also necessary for spiritual perfection. This thought of Emerson is strikingly similar to the theories of Wordsworth, expressed in many poems on flowers, and to Keats's famous line, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty."

In May, when sea winds pierced our solitudes,  
 I found the fresh rhodora in the woods,  
 Spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook,  
 To please the desert and the sluggish brook.  
 The purple petals, fallen in the pool, 5  
 Made the black water with their beauty gay;  
 Here might the redbird come his plumes to cool,  
 And court the flower that cheapens his array.  
 Rhodora! if the sages ask thee why  
 This charm is wasted on the earth and sky, 10  
 Tell them, dear, that if eyes were made for seeing,  
 Then Beauty is its own excuse for being.  
 Why thou wert there, O rival of the rose!  
 I never thought to ask, I never knew:  
 But, in my simple ignorance, suppose 15  
 The selfsame Power that brought me there brought you.

2. *rhodora*: a shrub commonly found in New England, having large clusters of pink flowers shading into purple, which come out before the leaves in early spring. The original Greek meaning of the word was "rose."

## COMPENSATION

Emerson wrote two short poems and one long essay on this subject (see page 282). The idea of balance in human life was a favorite of his. In the first stanza, when he is gay, others are silent; in the second it is the reverse.

Why should I keep holiday  
 When other men have none?  
 Why but because, when these are gay,  
 I sit and mourn alone?



And why, when mirth unseals all tongues, 5  
 Should mine alone be dumb?  
 Ah! late I spoke to silent throngs,  
 And now their hour is come.

## FORBEARANCE

Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?  
 Loved the wood rose, and left it on its stalk?  
 At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?  
 Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust?  
 And loved so well a high behavior, 5  
 In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,  
 Nobility more nobly to repay?  
 O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine!

## VOLUNTARIES III

The long poem "Voluntaries" contains five disconnected stanzas each treating of some act of the will in relation to the struggles of life. The third one of these is the most easily understood and the best known. The last four lines are frequently quoted.

In an age of fops and toys,  
 Wanting wisdom, void of right,  
 Who shall nerve heroic boys  
 To hazard all in Freedom's fight, —  
 Break sharply off their jolly games, 5  
 Forsake their comrades gay  
 And quit proud homes and youthful dames  
 For famine, toil and fray?  
 Yet on the nimble air benign  
 Speed nimbler messages, 10  
 That waft the breath of grace divine  
 To hearts in sloth and ease.  
 So nigh is grandeur to our dust,  
 So near is God to man,  
 When duty whispers low, *Thou must*, 15  
 The youth replies, *I can*.

## EACH AND ALL

That each person or thing is dependent on all that surrounds it is the theme of this poem. The poet builds up this idea through a number of examples of the intangible influence of environment, closing with the idea that one cannot escape from the spell of a truly harmonious and complete beauty.

Little thinks, in the field, yon red-cloaked clown,  
Of thee from the hilltop looking down;  
The heifer that lows in the upland farm,  
Far-heard, lows not thine ear to charm;  
The sexton, tolling his bell at noon, 5  
Deems not that great Napoleon  
Stops his horse, and lists with delight,  
Whilst his files sweep round yon Alpine height;  
Nor knowest thou what argument  
Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent. 10  
All are needed by each one;  
Nothing is fair or good alone.  
I thought the sparrow's note from heaven,  
Singing at dawn on the alder bough;  
I brought him home, in his nest, at even; 15  
He sings the song, but it cheers not now,  
For I did not bring home the river and sky; —  
He sang to my ear, — they sang to my eye.  
The delicate shells lay on the shore;  
The bubbles of the latest wave 20  
Fresh pearls to their enamel gave,  
And the bellowing of the savage sea  
Greeted their safe escape to me.  
I wiped away the weeds and foam,  
I fetched my sea-born treasures home; 25  
But the poor, unsightly, noisome things  
Had left their beauty on the shore  
With the sun and the sand and the wild uproar.  
The lover watched his graceful maid,  
As 'mid the virgin train she strayed, 30  
Nor knew her beauty's best attire  
Was woven still by the snow-white choir.  
At last she came to his hermitage,  
Like the bird from the woodlands to the cage; —

|  |    |
|--|----|
| The gay enchantment was undone,                | 35 |
| A gentle wife, but fairy none.                 |    |
| Then I said, " I covet truth;                  |    |
| Beauty is unripe childhood's cheat;            |    |
| I leave it behind with the games of youth: " — |    |
| As I spoke, beneath my feet                    | 40 |
| The ground pine curled its pretty wreath,      |    |
| Running over the club-moss burrs;              |    |
| I inhaled the violet's breath;                 |    |
| Around me stood the oaks and firs;             |    |
| Pine cones and acorns lay on the ground;       | 45 |
| Over me soared the eternal sky,                |    |
| Full of light and of deity;                    |    |
| Again I saw, again I heard,                    |    |
| The rolling river, the morning bird; —         |    |
| Beauty through my senses stole;                | 50 |
| I yielded myself to the perfect whole.         |    |

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. For each of Emerson's poems write a good sentence or two to show the point he wished to make. In how many of these can you find ideas similar to those in his essays?

2. In "The Concord Hymn" what is meant by "the shot heard round the world"? What appeal is made in the last stanza? Why is *hymn* a suitable word to describe this poem?

3. What evidence can you find in these poems that Emerson, as well as Bryant, was a lover of nature? Which two discuss the meaning of beauty? Is there any difference in the point about beauty made in these two poems?

4. As you observe your own life and that of others, do you find compensation such as Emerson describes? other kinds of compensation?

5. Why do you think Emerson admired a person who displayed the qualities found in "Forbearance"? Are these some of the qualities you would seek in a friend? If not, make your own list of qualities.

6. What does "Voluntaries III" show of Emerson's attitude toward youth? How was youth's response illustrated in the World War? What examples can you give of sacrifice of self to duty in time of peace? (See in this connection "Walter Reed," page 328.)

7. What does "Each and All" say about the unconscious influence of one person on another, especially in lines 9 and 10? Point out examples of loss of charm through loss of environment. Can you give examples from your own experience? Does this poem contradict Emerson's plea for self-reliance?

*For Ambitious Students*

8. To reinforce the point made in the first stanza of "The Concord Hymn," draw a map or bring to class maps from books or magazines showing the number of republics in the world at the time of the American Revolution and the number today.

9. Report to the class interesting details about the Battle of Concord and its results. In this connection read Longfellow's "Paul Revere's Ride."

10. Compare "The Concord Hymn" with Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address" (see page 1052). What similarities and differences were there in the occasion? in the appeal made at the end?

11. If you are collecting poems on flowers, compare the ideas that different flowers have suggested to different poets: the rhodora to Emerson, the fringed gentian to Bryant, the honeysuckle to Freneau, the daffodil to Wordsworth, the dandelion to Lowell, and so on.

**JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-1892)**

Whittier presents a striking contrast to the other New England poets. Bryant, for instance, wrote his best poetry in youth before he became embroiled in newspaper life, whereas Whittier in his youth was too much engrossed in the abolition cause to write much besides antislavery poems, editorials, and tracts, and thus his best poetry was produced after he was fifty. Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes were all college men with a long line of college-bred ancestors behind them, whereas Whittier, the Quaker farmboy, earned money for two terms in Haverhill Academy by cobbling. All the others traveled extensively, acquired valuable libraries, and lived in well-appointed or even handsome homes, whereas Whittier never crossed the ocean, was out of New England only for short periods, and even after the success of "Snowbound" had little extra money for luxuries. He was born at the old homestead described in "Snowbound" near Haverhill, Massachusetts, and was buried from his comfortable but unpretentious white frame house in Amesbury not twenty miles away. Thus he is more distinctly an American product than any of the other New Englanders, less molded and modified by Old World culture.

One marked influence from across the water did, however, reach him. In early life a volume of Burns's poems was lent him by his schoolmaster. The lyrics of this Scotch farmboy struck an answering chord in the New England farmboy, and spurred him on to write his first verses. Because of similarity in the pictures of country life drawn by the two poets, Whittier

has often been called "the American Burns," but in character the two men were totally different.

Whittier's early interest in antislavery appears in his first printed poem, "The Exile's Departure," published in the paper edited by the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, with whom he later became closely acquainted. Early portraits of Whittier show the flashing dark eye and firm-set mouth of a born reformer. He threw himself heart and soul into the then unpopular cause of abolition. Several times he suffered from mob violence. Once in Philadelphia when his newspaper office was being sacked and burned, Whittier, disguised in a heavy cloak, apparently joined the marauders and thus cleverly saved some important papers in his desk. As the abolition movement grew in favor and Whittier's ringing poems won the popular fancy, he gradually took his place among the other New England writers, a place firmly established when he was asked to become a contributor to the *Atlantic Monthly*.

When we survey his life as a whole, the War between the States seems to cut it into two distinct parts. Before the war we think of him as a fiery soul struggling in the face of unpopularity, poverty, and ill health to champion his beloved cause. After the war we picture him as the gentle, white-bearded old Quaker, with his quaint use of *thee*, visited by many admiring friends and receiving for a quarter of a century the plaudits of the nation.

### PROEM

Whittier wrote this poem in 1847, while he was still primarily concerned with the antislavery movement, and it was used as a preface in his collected editions. It shows his humility in comparing himself with the great poets he loved to read, and also his dedication of himself to the cause of freedom.

I love the old melodious lays  
Which softly melt the ages through,  
The songs of Spenser's golden days,  
Arcadian Sidney's silvery phrase,  
Sprinkling our noon of time with freshest morning dew. 5

Yet, vainly in my quiet hours  
To breathe their marvelous notes I try;  
I feel them, as the leaves and flowers  
In silence feel the dewy showers,  
And drink with glad, still lips the blessing of the sky. 10

3. Spenser: a sixteenth-century English poet, whose *Faerie Queene* told stories of the days of chivalry. 4. Sidney: a sixteenth-century English poet, who wrote a pastoral romance called *Arcadia*.

The rigor of a frozen clime,  
The harshness of an untaught ear,  
The jarring words of one whose rime  
Beat often Labor's hurried time,  
Or Duty's rugged march through storm and strife, are here. 15

Of mystic beauty, dreamy grace,  
No rounded art the lack supplies;  
Unskilled the subtle lines to trace,  
Or softer shades of Nature's face,  
I view her common forms with unanointed eyes. 20

Nor mine the seerlike power to show  
The secrets of the heart and mind;  
To drop the plummet line below  
Our common world of joy and woe,  
A more intense despair or brighter hope to find. 25

Yet here at least an earnest sense  
Of human right and weal is shown;  
A hate of tyranny intense,  
And hearty in its vehemence,  
As if my brother's pain and sorrow were my own. 30

O Freedom! if to me belong  
Nor mighty Milton's gift divine,  
Nor Marvell's wit and graceful song,  
Still with a love as deep and strong  
As theirs, I lay like them, my best gifts on thy shrine! 35

32. **Milton**: a seventeenth-century English poet, author of the world-famous epic *Paradise Lost*. 33. **Marvell**: a seventeenth-century English poet. Both Milton and Marvell took active part on the Puritan side in the English Civil War.

### ICHABOD

The title of this poem is an old Hebrew name meaning "the glory has departed." In the Bible story (Sam. 4:21) a child was given this name because the ark of the Lord had been captured by the enemy and the high priest had died. Here Whittier applies the term to Daniel Webster, whose famous "Seventh of March Speech," 1850, upheld a proposed compromise bill between North and South. Since this included a fugitive-slave law and admission of new territories without slave restrictions,

Whittier felt that the cause of abolition had been sacrificed, and its high priest, Webster, had fallen. It is generally conceded by modern historians that Webster was unjustly condemned at the time and that his motive was purely to save the Union rather than to win the Presidency. Whittier, who was, by the way, related to Webster, said himself that the poem was dictated by no partisan or personal enmity. "On the contrary, my admiration of the splendid personality and intellectual power of the great Senator was never stronger than when I laid down his speech, and, in one of the saddest moments of my life, penned this protest."

|  |    |
|--|----|
| So fallen! so lost! the light withdrawn<br>Which once he wore!<br>The glory from his gray hairs gone<br>Forevermore!             |    |
| Reville him not, the Tempter hath<br>A snare for all;<br>And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,<br>Befit his fall!              | 5  |
| Oh, dumb be passion's stormy rage,<br>When he who might<br>Have lighted up and led his age,<br>Falls back in night.              | 10 |
| Scorn! would the angels laugh, to mark<br>A bright soul driven,<br>Fiend-goaded, down the endless dark,<br>From hope and heaven! | 15 |
| Let not the land once proud of him<br>Insult him now,<br>Nor brand with deeper shame his dim,<br>Dishonored brow.                | 20 |
| But let its humbled sons, instead,<br>From sea to lake,<br>A long lament, as for the dead,<br>In sadness make.                   |    |
| Of all we loved and honored, naught<br>Save power remains;<br>A fallen angel's pride of thought,<br>Still strong in chains.      | 25 |

All else is gone; from those great eyes  
 The soul has fled: 30  
 When faith is lost, when honor dies,  
 The man is dead!

Then, pay the reverence of old days  
 To his dead fame;  
 Walk backward, with averted gaze, 35  
 And hide the shame!

## SKIPPER IRESOON'S RIDE

When Whittier was a young man at Haverhill Academy, a schoolmate from Marblehead told him the story of Skipper Ireson and the old song which had been derisively hurled at him by the women of Marblehead. Many years after, Whittier turned the story into the following ballad, published in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1857. It has always been one of the most popular of the many ballads that the poet wrote on American legends or historical incidents. But more than twenty years after he had written it, Whittier discovered from a *History of Marblehead* that Ireson had really been an innocent victim. He had taken the punishment in silence rather than betray his mutinous crew, who refused to stop for the sinking ship lest their valuable catch of cod be spoiled. Whittier thanked the author of the history for clearing the matter up, saying, "I certainly would not do injustice to anyone, dead or living."

Of all the rides since the birth of time,  
 Told in story or sung in rhyme, —  
 On Apuleius' Golden Ass,  
 Or one-eyed Calendar's horse of brass,  
 Witch astride of a human hack, 5  
 Islam's prophet on Al-Borák, —  
 The strangest ride that ever was sped  
 Was Ireson's, out from Marblehead!  
 Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart 10  
 By the women of Marblehead!

3. **Apuleius' Golden Ass:** Apuleius, a Roman writer of the second century A.D., told the adventures of a young man turned into an ass. 4. **one-eyed Calendar:** Whittier's memory of the Arabian Nights was somewhat confused. The Calendar and the brass horse which could fly were in two different stories. 6. **Al-Borák:** the winged horse with human face that carried Mohammed to heaven.



Body of turkey, head of owl,  
 Wings adroop like a rained-on fowl,  
 Feathered and ruffled in every part,  
 Skipper Ireson stood in the cart. 15

Scores of women, old and young,  
 Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,  
 Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,  
 Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:  
 " Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt, 20  
 Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
 By the women o' Morble'ead! "

Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,  
 Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,  
 Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase 25  
 Bacchus round some antique vase,  
 Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,  
 Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,  
 With conch shells blowing and fish horns' twang,  
 Over and over the Maenads sang: 30

" Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,  
 Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
 By the women o' Morble'ead! "

Small pity for him! — He sailed away  
 From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay, — 35  
 Sailed away from a sinking wreck,  
 With his own town's people on her deck!  
 " Lay by! lay by! " they called to him.

Back he answered, " Sink or swim!  
 Brag of your catch of fish again! " 40  
 And off he sailed through the fog and rain!

Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
 By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur 45  
 That wreck shall lie forevermore.  
 Mother and sister, wife and maid,  
 Looked from the rocks of Marblehead

30. **Maenads:** followers of Bacchus, god of wine. 35. **Chaleur Bay:** in the Gulf of St. Lawrence.

Over the moaning and rainy sea, —  
 Looked for the coming that might not be! 50  
 What did the winds and the sea birds say  
 Of the cruel captain who sailed away? —  
     Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
     Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
     By the women of Marblehead. 55

Through the street, on either side,  
 Up flew windows, doors swung wide;  
 Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,  
 Treble lent the fish horn's bray.  
 Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound, 60  
 Hulks of old sailors run aground,  
 Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,  
 And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:  
     " Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,  
     Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt 65  
     By the women o' Morble'ead! "

Sweetly along the Salem road  
 Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.  
 Little the wicked skipper knew  
 Of the fields so green and the sky so blue. 70  
 Riding there in his sorry trim,  
 Like an Indian idol glum and grim,  
 Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear  
 Of voices shouting far and near:  
     " Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt, 75  
     Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt  
     By the women o' Morble'ead! "

" Hear me, neighbors! " at last he cried, —  
 " What to me is this noisy ride?  
 What is the shame that clothes the skin 80  
 To the nameless horror that lives within?  
 Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck,  
 And hear a cry from a reeling deck!  
 Hate me and curse me, — I only dread  
 The hand of God and the face of the dead! " 85  
     Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
     Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
     By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea  
 Said, " God has touched him! why should **wel** " 90  
 Said an old wife mourning her only son,  
 " Cut the rogue's tether and let him run! "  
 So with soft relentings and rude excuse,  
 Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,  
 And gave him a cloak to hide him in, 95  
 And left him alone with his shame and sin.  
 Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,  
 Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart  
 By the women of Marblehead!

## ABRAHAM DAVENPORT

In *The Tent on the Beach* Whittier used a slight thread of story to assemble a number of his narrative poems. Four friends, a scholar, a poet (Whittier himself), a traveler, and a singer, who are spending a summer vacation on the beach are exchanging stories and songs in the evening. The following story is the last one read by the poet. Just as he finishes it, the moon rises out of the ocean, and all are silent " before that sudden glory."

The tale is based on an actual occurrence to be found in historical records. The poet tells his friends before reading it to them that he wrote the poem when the coming in of the Asiatic plague was terrifying the country. You will see the connection when you read it.

In the old days (a custom laid aside  
 With breeches and cocked hats) the people sent  
 Their wisest men to make the public laws.  
 And so, from a brown homestead, where the Sound  
 Drinks the small tribute of the Mianas, 5  
 Waved over by the woods of Rippowams,  
 And hallowed by pure lives and tranquil deaths,  
 Stamford sent up to the councils of the state  
 Wisdom and grace in Abraham Davenport.

'Twas on a May day of the far old year 10  
 Seventeen hundred eighty, that there fell  
 Over the bloom and sweet life of the spring,

5. **Mianas**: a little river near **Stamford** (line 8), a town in southwestern Connecticut. 6. **Rippowams**: another river near Stamford.

Over the fresh earth and the heaven of noon,  
 A horror of great darkness, like the night  
 In day of which the Norland sagas tell, — 15  
 The Twilight of the Gods. The low-hung sky  
 Was black with ominous clouds, save where its rim  
 Was fringed with a dull glow, like that which climbs  
 The crater's sides from the red hell below.  
 Birds ceased to sing, and all the barnyard fowls 20  
 Roosted; the cattle at the pasture bars  
 Lowed, and looked homeward; bats on leathern wings  
 Flitted abroad; the sounds of labor died;  
 Men prayed, and women wept: all ears grew sharp  
 To hear the doom blast of the trumpet shatter 25  
 The black sky, that the dreadful face of Christ  
 Might look from the rent clouds, not as he looked  
 A loving guest at Bethany, but stern  
 As Justice and inexorable Law.

Meanwhile in the old Statehouse, dim as ghosts, 30  
 Sat the lawgivers of Connecticut,  
 Trembling beneath their legislative robes.  
 "It is the Lord's Great Day! Let us adjourn,"  
 Some said; and then, as if with one accord,  
 All eyes were turned to Abraham Davenport. 35  
 He rose, slow cleaving with his steady voice  
 The intolerable hush. "This well may be  
 The Day of Judgment which the world awaits;  
 But be it so or not, I only know  
 My present duty, and my Lord's command 40  
 To occupy till He come. So at the post  
 Where He hath set me in His providence,  
 I choose, for one, to meet Him face to face, —  
 No faithless servant frightened from my task,  
 But ready when the Lord of the harvest calls; 45  
 And therefore, with all reverence, I would say,  
 Let God do His work, we will see to ours.  
 Bring in the candles." And they brought them in.

16. **Twilight of the Gods:** in Norse mythology the final darkness and destruction of everything. It is the subject of a famous opera by Wagner. 25. **the doom blast of the trumpet:** The Puritan teaching emphasized the Day of Judgment, announced by an angel's trumpet, to such an extent that this was a very real fear to people of that day. 30. **Statehouse:** at Hartford, the capital.

Then by the flaring lights the Speaker read,  
 Albeit with husky voice and shaking hands, 50  
 An act to amend an act to regulate  
 The shad and alewife fisheries. Whereupon  
 Wisely and well spake Abraham Davenport,  
 Straight to the question, with no figures of speech  
 Save the ten Arab signs, yet not without 55  
 The shrewd dry humor natural to the man:  
 His awe-struck colleagues listening all the while,  
 Between the pauses of his argument,  
 To hear the thunder of the wrath of God  
 Break from the hollow trumpet of the cloud. 60

And there he stands in memory to this day,  
 Erect, self-poised, a rugged face, half seen  
 Against the background of unnatural dark,  
 A witness to the ages as they pass,  
 That simple duty hath no place for fear. 65

55. **ten Arab signs:** Our numerals are derived from the Arabic. In other words, he quoted exact figures on the problem.

### THE ETERNAL GOODNESS

Written in 1865 just at the close of the War between the States, this is generally considered the finest of Whittier's religious poems. Simplicity, sincerity, and human kindness are evident throughout. More than that, it is an exalted plea for faith in the *goodness* of God.

O friends! with whom my feet have trod  
 The quiet aisles of prayer,  
 Glad witness to your zeal for God  
 And love of man I bear.

I trace your lines of argument; 5  
 Your logic linked and strong  
 I weigh as one who dreads dissent,  
 And fears a doubt as wrong.

But still my human hands are weak  
 To hold your iron creeds: 10  
 Against the words ye bid me speak  
 My heart within me pleads.

Who fathoms the Eternal Thought?  
 Who talks of scheme and plan?  
 The Lord is God! He needeth not  
 The poor device of man. 15

I walk with bare, hushed feet the ground  
 Ye tread with boldness shod;  
 I dare not fix with mete and bound  
 The love and power of God. 20

Ye praise His justice; even such  
 His pitying love I deem:  
 Ye seek a king; I fain would touch  
 The robe that hath no seam.

Ye see the curse which overbroods 25  
 A world of pain and loss;  
 I hear our Lord's beatitudes  
 And prayer upon the cross.

More than your schoolmen teach, within  
 Myself, alas! I know: 30  
 Too dark ye cannot paint the sin,  
 Too small the merit show.

I bow my forehead to the dust,  
 I veil mine eyes for shame,  
 And urge, in trembling self-distrust, 35  
 A prayer without a claim.

I see the wrong that round me lies,  
 I feel the guilt within;  
 I hear, with groan and travail-cries,  
 The world confess its sin. 40

Yet, in the maddening maze of things,  
 And tossed by storm and flood,  
 To one fixed trust my spirit clings;  
 I know that God is good!

19. **mete and bound**: definite boundaries (legal term). 27. **beatitudes**: series of blessings given in Matt. 5 : 3-12.

Not mine to look where cherubim                      45  
And seraphs may not see,  
But nothing can be good in Him  
Which evil is in me.

The wrong that pains my soul below  
I dare not throne above;                                 50  
I know not of His hate,— I know  
His goodness and His love.

I dimly guess from blessings known  
Of greater out of sight,  
And, with the chastened Psalmist, own  
His judgments, too, are right. 55

I long for household voices gone,  
For vanished smiles I long,  
But God hath led my dear ones on,  
And He can do no wrong. 60

I know not what the future hath  
Of marvel or surprise,  
Assured alone that life and death  
His mercy underlies.

And if my heart and flesh are weak                      65  
To bear an untried pain,  
The bruised reed He will not break,  
But strengthen and sustain.

No offering of my own I have,  
Nor works my faith to prove;  
I can but give the gifts He gave,  
And plead His love for love.

And so beside the Silent Sea  
I wait the muffled oar;  
No harm from Him can come to me  
On ocean or on shore.

I know not where His islands lift  
Their fronded palms in air;  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care. 80

O brothers! if my faith is vain,  
If hopes like these betray,  
Pray for me that my feet may gain  
The sure and safer way.

And Thou, O Lord! by whom are seen 85  
Thy creatures as they be,  
Forgive me if too close I lean  
My human heart on Thee!

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In "Proem" what lacks does Whittier feel in comparing himself with famous poets? Explain especially lines 11-15. What does the last stanza show about the subject matter of Whittier's early poems and the spirit in which he wrote them?

2. What attitude do you find in "Ichabod" — pity or scorn? Which of the two would you most hate to have directed at you?

3. In "Skipper Ireson's Ride" what details make you feel the spirit of the women? Why did they finally let the skipper go? His speech is imaginary; in reality he said nothing during the ride. Does Whittier's change make a more effective poem?

4. What is the main point brought out by Abraham Davenport's character? Which of Emerson's short poems might this be said to illustrate? What other examples can you give from literature or your own experience of persons who have done their duty in the face of great difficulties?

5. Sum up in a few sentences the main thought of "The Eternal Goodness." Does it show in any way that Whittier was a Quaker? What contrast is there between the thinking of Whittier and that of the "friends" addressed? With which side do you agree?

#### *For Ambitious Students*

6. To clarify the poem "Ichabod" for the class, report on the Compromise of 1850 and what Webster said about it in his "Seventh of March Speech."



7. Read "The Lost Occasion," a poem written by Whittier about Webster after the latter's death, to find out whether the poet changed his opinion of the statesman later on.

8. Read a similar poem "The Lost Leader" by Robert Browning. Are the attitudes of Whittier and Browning toward their fallen idols alike or different?

9. If you have ever been in Marblehead, describe it to the class; if not, find pictures of the quaint town to show the class.

10. Read a modern version in "The True Story of Skipper Ireson" by Charles Buxton Going (to be found in Untermeyer's *Yesterday and Today*). Point out differences in the two versions. Which do you like better as a poem? Why?

11. Composition suggestions:

- a. An old legend of the early days of your community
- b. An incident of cool, straightforward action in an emergency, such as a fire, a tornado, an auto accident
- c. How you felt when you were disillusioned about some hero

## HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

(1807-1882)

Since Longfellow is pre-eminently "the Children's Poet" you have doubtless been acquainted with him for many years. If you have never read "The Children's Hour," "The Village Blacksmith," "The Arrow and the Song," "Paul Revere's Ride," *The Song of Hiawatha*, *Evangeline*, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*, it is almost as if you had never jumped rope, played marbles, gone on picnics, or ridden in an automobile. You have missed some of the common experiences which American boys and girls are assumed to have had. Your study as a maturing high-school student may well be directed to some of the poems less commonly read than the foregoing.

Longfellow's life presents an unusually smooth path of education, financial ease, happiness, and popular acclaim, broken only by the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of each of his two wives. His boyhood was spent in Portland, Maine, where both the Longfellows and the Wadsworths were families of means and social standing. He made such a brilliant record at Bowdoin College that soon after graduation he was selected to fill a newly created chair of modern languages in that college. Three years of study in various European countries, six years of teaching at Bowdoin, his marriage to a beautiful Portland girl, a call to Harvard College, and the chance for further European study followed in happy succession. Then came the first tragedy when in the winter of their stay in Holland his young wife died and was buried far from home. This, with his lonely study of

German mysticism and romance, lent a twilight tone to much of his later writing, a mingling of sentiment, melancholy, and wistful dreaming of the past. Returning to Harvard, he taught for eighteen years, married again, and settled down for the rest of his life in the old colonial Craigie House in Cambridge, where today one can see his handsome study left just as it was during his lifetime. Sorrow visited him again when his second wife was accidentally burned to death, but his later years were brightened by his children about him, his happiness in writing, and the many honors heaped upon him. Noteworthy it is that he was the first American to be honored by a bust in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey. But such a tribute after his death seems cold compared with that which came during his life, when the school children of Cambridge contributed their pennies to have carved for him an armchair from the wood of "the spreading chestnut tree."

## HYMN TO THE NIGHT

This poem appeared in the volume *Voices of the Night*, published four years after the death of Longfellow's first wife. It shows the kind of consolation which came to him in this period of sadness.

'Ασπασίη, τριλλιστος<sup>1</sup>

|  |    |
|--|----|
| I heard the trailing garments of the Night     |    |
| Sweep through her marble halls!                |    |
| I saw her sable skirts all fringed with light  |    |
| From the celestial walls!                      |    |
| I felt her presence, by its spell of might,    | 5  |
| Stoop o'er me from above;                      |    |
| The calm, majestic presence of the Night,      |    |
| As of the one I love.                          |    |
| I heard the sounds of sorrow and delight,      |    |
| The manifold, soft chimes,                     | 10 |
| That fill the haunted chambers of the Night,   |    |
| Like some old poet's rhymes.                   |    |
| From the cool cisterns of the midnight air     |    |
| My spirit drank repose;                        |    |
| The fountain of perpetual peace flows there, — | 15 |
| From those deep cisterns flows.                |    |

<sup>1</sup> "Welcome, thrice prayed for . . ." *Iliad*, viii., 488.

O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear  
 What man has borne before!  
 Thou layest thy finger on the lips of Care,  
 And they complain no more.

20

Peace! Peace! Orestes-like I breathe this prayer!  
 Descend with broad-winged flight,  
 The welcome, the thrice-prayed for, the most fair,  
 The best-beloved Night!

21. **Orestes:** a youth of Greek mythology, who prayed to Athena for peace from the pursuit of the Furies.

### THE ARSENAL AT SPRINGFIELD

This impressive plea for peace was written long before the War between the States. In the light of the two great struggles through which our country has passed since then, and of the efforts to establish world peace during the twentieth century, this poem has a real message for the modern world.

This is the Arsenal. From floor to ceiling,  
 Like a huge organ, rise the burnished arms;  
 But from their silent pipes no anthem pealing  
 Startles the villages with strange alarms.

Ah! what a sound will rise, how wild and dreary, 5  
 When the death angel touches those swift keys!  
 What loud lament and dismal Miserere  
 Will mingle with their awful symphonies!

I hear even now the infinite fierce chorus,  
 The cries of agony, the endless groan, 10  
 Which, through the ages that have gone before us,  
 In long reverberations reach our own.

On helm and harness rings the Saxon hammer,  
 Through Cimbric forest roars the Norseman's song,  
 And loud, amid the universal clamor, 15  
 O'er distant deserts sounds the Tatar gong.

1. **Arsenal:** in Springfield, Massachusetts. 7. **Miserere:** the first word in the Latin version of the Psalm beginning "Have mercy upon me, O Lord!" 14. **Cimbric:** referring to the Cimbri, a tribe of Norsemen destroyed by the Romans. 16. **Tatar:** The Tatars, a race of savage Orientals, swept over Asia and most of Europe in the thirteenth century.

I hear the Florentine, who from his palace  
 Wheels out his battle bell with dreadful din,  
 And Aztec priests upon their teocallis  
 Beat the wild war drums made of serpent's skin; 20

The tumult of each sacked and burning village;  
 The shout that every prayer for mercy drowns;  
 The soldiers' revels in the midst of pillage;  
 The wail of famine in beleaguered towns;

The bursting shell, the gateway wrenched asunder, 25  
 The rattling musketry, the clashing blade;  
 And ever and anon, in tones of thunder,  
 The diapason of the cannonade.

Is it, O man, with such discordant noises,  
 With such accursèd instruments as these, 30  
 Thou drownest Nature's sweet and kindly voices,  
 And jarrest the celestial harmonies?

Were half the power, that fills the world with terror,  
 Were half the wealth bestowed on camps and courts,  
 Given to redeem the human mind from error, 35  
 There were no need of arsenals nor forts:

The warrior's name would be a name abhorred!  
 And every nation, that should lift again  
 Its hand against a brother, on its forehead  
 Would wear forevermore the curse of Cain! 40

Down the dark future, through long generations,  
 The echoing sounds grow fainter and then cease;  
 And like a bell, with solemn, sweet vibrations,  
 I hear once more the voice of Christ say, "Peace!"

17. **Florentine**: The soldiers of Florence, Italy, in medieval times actually wheeled a great bell out into the battlefield. 19. **Aztec**: a native race of Mexicans, found and later practically exterminated by the Spaniards. Their **teocallis** were flat-topped pyramids of worship. 40. **Cain**: a son of Adam and Eve who was cursed because he slew his brother Abel (Genesis, Chapter 4).



Often I think of the beautiful town  
 That is seated by the sea;  
 Often in thought go up and down  
 The pleasant streets of that dear old town,  
 And my youth comes back to me. 5  
 And a verse of a Lapland song  
 Is haunting my memory still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I can see the shadowy lines of its trees, 10  
 And catch, in sudden gleams,  
 The sheen of the far-surrounding seas,  
 And islands that were the Hesperides  
 Of all my boyish dreams.  
 And the burden of that old song, 15  
 It murmurs and whispers still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the black wharves and the slips,  
 And the sea tides tossing free; 20  
 And Spanish sailors with bearded lips,  
 And the beauty and mystery of the ships,  
 And the magic of the sea.  
 And the voice of that wayward song  
 Is singing and saying still: 25  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the bulwarks by the shore,  
 And the fort upon the hill;  
 The sunrise gun, with its hollow roar, 30  
 The drumbeat repeated o'er and o'er,  
 And the bugle wild and shrill.  
 And the music of that old song  
 Throbs in my memory still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will, 35  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

13. **Hesperides:** in Greek mythology the maidens guarding the golden apples, or the island of the sunset on which they lived. From a certain high point in Portland one can get a magnificent view of the sunset across the bay. Perhaps the poet had this in mind.

I remember the sea fight far away,  
 How it thundered o'er the tide!  
 And the dead captains, as they lay  
 In their graves, o'erlooking the tranquil bay 40  
 Where they in battle died.  
 And the sound of that mournful song  
 Goes through me with a thrill:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." 45

I can see the breezy dome of groves,  
 The shadows of Deering's Woods;  
 And the friendships old and the early loves  
 Come back with a Sabbath sound, as of doves  
 In quiet neighborhoods. 50  
 And the verse of that sweet old song,  
 It flutters and murmurs still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

I remember the gleams and glooms that dart 55  
 Across the schoolboy's brain;  
 The song and the silence in the heart,  
 That in part are prophecies, and in part  
 Are longings wild and vain.  
 And the voice of that fitful song 60  
 Sings on, and is never still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

There are things of which I may not speak;  
 There are dreams that cannot die; 65  
 There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,  
 And bring a pallor into the cheek,  
 And a mist before the eye.  
 And the words of that fatal song  
 Come over me like a chill: 70  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

37. *sea fight far away*: an engagement between the American *Enterprise* and the English *Boxer* in 1813. Longfellow was six years old at the time. The two captains were actually buried side by side, as the poem suggests.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW 499

Strange to me now are the forms I meet  
 When I visit the dear old town;  
 But the native air is pure and sweet, 75  
 And the trees that o'ershadow each well-known street,  
 As they balance up and down,  
 Are singing the beautiful song,  
 Are sighing and whispering still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will, 80  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."  
 And Deering's Woods are fresh and fair,  
 And with joy that is almost pain  
 My heart goes back to wander there,  
 And among the dreams of the days that were, 85  
 I find my lost youth again.  
 And, the strange and beautiful song,  
 The groves are repeating it still:  
 "A boy's will is the wind's will,  
 And the thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts." 90

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH CAPE

A LEAF FROM KING ALFRED'S OROSIUS

Longfellow not only popularized American history in his poetry but also did a great deal to familiarize the public with foreign literature, in which he was well versed. His studies of Scandinavian lore come out in many poems, such as "The Skeleton in Armor," and "The Saga of King Olaf" in *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. The following story was taken from a translation made by King Alfred the Great of England (ninth century) of a history and geography of the world written by a Spanish monk, Orosius (fifth century). Alfred added to the original some investigations of his own, among which was his interview with Othere, a Norwegian sailor who had rounded the North Cape about A.D. 870. Observe Alfred's incredulity about the midnight sun, which is not surprising in view of the ignorance of his day about the earth's shape and movement.

Othere, the old sea captain,  
 Who dwelt in Helgoland,  
 To King Alfred, the Lover of Truth,  
 Brought a snow-white walrus tooth,  
 Which he held in his brown right hand. 5

2. **Helgoland**: probably the island of Helgo southwest of the North Cape, off the coast of Norway. Lines 21-30 show that it is not the well-known Helgoland near Denmark.



His figure was tall and stately,  
 Like a boy's his eye appeared;  
 His hair was yellow as hay,  
 But threads of a silvery gray  
 Gleamed in his tawny beard. 10

Hearty and hale was Othere,  
 His cheek had the color of oak;  
 With a kind of laugh in his speech,  
 Like the sea tide on a beach,  
 As unto the king he spoke. 15

And Alfred, King of the Saxons,  
 Had a book upon his knees,  
 And wrote down the wondrous tale  
 Of him who was first to sail  
 Into the Arctic seas. 20

"So far I live to the northward,  
 No man lives north of me;  
 To the east are wild mountain chains,  
 And beyond them meres and plains;  
 To the westward all is sea. 25

"So far I live to the northward,  
 From the harbor of Skeringes-hale,  
 If you only sailed by day,  
 With a fair wind all the way,  
 More than a month would you sail. 30

"I own six hundred reindeer,  
 With sheep and swine beside;  
 I have tribute from the Finns,  
 Whalebone and reindeer skins,  
 And ropes of walrus hide. 35

"I plowed the land with horses,  
 But my heart was ill at ease,  
 For the old seafaring men  
 Came to me now and then,  
 With their sagas of the seas; — 40

27. *Skeringes-hale*: in the Gulf of Oslo.

“ Of Iceland and of Greenland,  
 And the stormy Hebrides,  
 And the undiscovered deep; —  
 Oh, I could not eat nor sleep  
 For thinking of those seas. 45

“ To the northward stretched the desert,  
 How far I fain would know;  
 So at last I sallied forth,  
 And three days sailed due north,  
 As far as the whale ships go. 50

“ To the west of me was the ocean,  
 To the right the desolate shore,  
 But I did not slacken sail  
 For the walrus or the whale,  
 Till after three days more. 55

“ The days grew longer and longer,  
 Till they became as one,  
 And northward through the haze  
 I saw the sullen blaze  
 Of the red midnight sun. 60

“ And then uprose before me,  
 Upon the water's edge,  
 The huge and haggard shape  
 Of that unknown North Cape,  
 Whose form is like a wedge. 65

“ The sea was rough and stormy,  
 The tempest howled and wailed,  
 And the sea fog, like a ghost,  
 Haunted that dreary coast,  
 But onward still I sailed. 70

“ Four days I steered to eastward,  
 Four days without a night:  
 Round in a fiery ring  
 Went the great sun, O king,  
 With red and lurid light.” 75

Here Alfred, King of the Saxons,  
Ceased writing for a while,  
And raised his eyes from his book,  
With a strange and puzzled look,  
And an incredulous smile. 80

But Othere, the old sea captain,  
He neither paused nor stirred,  
Till the king listened, and then  
Once more took up his pen,  
And wrote down every word. 85

"And now the land," said Othere,  
"Bent southward suddenly,  
And I followed the curving shore  
And ever southward bore  
Into a nameless sea. 90

"And there we hunted the walrus,  
The narwhale, and the seal;  
Ha! 'twas a noble game!  
And like the lightning's flame  
Flew our harpoons of steel. 95

"There were six of us altogether,  
Norsemen of Helgoland;  
In two days and no more  
We killed of them threescore,  
And dragged them to the strand! " 100

Here Alfred the Truthteller  
Suddenly closed his book,  
And lifted his blue eyes  
With doubt and strange surmise  
Depicted in their look. 105

And Othere the old sea captain  
Stared at him wild and weird,  
Then smiled, till his shining teeth  
Gleamed white from underneath  
His tawny, quivering beard. 110

90. *nameless sea*: the White Sea. 92. *narwhale*: a whalelike animal about twenty feet long with a projecting ivory tusk.

And to the King of the Saxons,  
 In witness of the truth,  
 Raising his noble head,  
 He stretched his brown hand, and said,  
 " Behold this walrus tooth! "

115

## THE TIDE RISES, THE TIDE FALLS

The fascination that the sea held for Longfellow in his boyhood expressed itself throughout his life in many ways, sometimes through stories as in the preceding poem and sometimes in sea lyrics as in the following. In fact, he is America's greatest poet of the sea. Observe the smooth-flowing rhythm and the sense of fate that are perfectly adapted to the thought of the inevitable tide of the ocean.

The tide rises, the tide falls,  
 The twilight darkens, the curlew calls;  
 Along the sea sands damp and brown  
 The traveler hastens toward the town,  
 And the tide rises, the tide falls.

5

Darkness settles on roofs and walls,  
 But the sea, the sea in the darkness calls;  
 The little waves, with their soft white hands,  
 Efface the footprints in the sands,  
 And the tide rises, the tide falls.

10

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls  
 Stamp and neigh as the hostler calls;  
 The day returns, but nevermore  
 Returns the traveler to the shore,  
 And the tide rises, the tide falls.

15

## THE BELLS OF SAN BLAS

Just a week before he died Longfellow wrote this, his last poem. It is typical of so much of his poetry with its romantic setting, its tender lingering over the past, and its bell music that it seems a fitting swan song. Especially significant is the last stanza, which does not show the glorification of the past at the expense of the present and future, so characteristic of aged men, but rather the hopeful note of progress and coming light. " It is daybreak everywhere."

What say the bells of San Blas  
 To the ships that southward pass  
     From the harbor of Mazatlan?  
 To them it is nothing more  
 Than the sound of surf on the shore, — 5  
     Nothing more to master or man.

But to me, a dreamer of dreams,  
 To whom what is and what seems  
     Are often one and the same, —  
 The bells of San Blas to me 10  
 Have a strange, wild melody,  
     And are something more than a name.

For bells are the voice of the church;  
 They have tones that touch and search  
     The hearts of young and old; 15  
 One sound to all, yet each  
 Lends a meaning to their speech,  
     And the meaning is manifold.

They are a voice of the past,  
 Of an age that is fading fast, 20  
     Of a power austere and grand;  
 When the flag of Spain unfurled  
 Its folds o'er this Western world,  
     And the priest was lord of the land.

The chapel that once looked down 25  
 On the little seaport town  
     Has crumbled into the dust;  
 And on oaken beams below  
 The bells swing to and fro,  
     And are green with mold and rust. 30

"Is, then, the old faith dead,"  
 They say, "and in its stead  
     Is some new faith proclaimed,  
 That we are forced to remain  
 Naked to sun and rain, 35  
     Unsheltered and ashamed?"

1. **San Blas**: name of the church or monastery. 3. **Mazatlan**: a town on the west coast of Mexico.

" Once in our tower aloof  
 We rang over wall and roof  
     Our warnings and our complaints;  
 And round about us there 40  
 The white doves filled the air,  
     Like the white souls of the saints.

" The saints! Ah, have they grown  
 Forgetful of their own?  
     Are they asleep, or dead, 45  
 That open to the sky  
 Their ruined missions lie,  
     No longer tenanted?

" Oh, bring us back once more  
 The vanished days of yore, 50  
     When the world with faith was filled;  
 Bring back the fervid zeal,  
 The hearts of fire and steel,  
     The hands that believe and build.

" Then from our tower again 55  
 We will send over land and main  
     Our voices of command,  
 Like exiled kings who return  
 To their thrones, and the people learn  
     That the priest is lord of the land! " 60

O bells of San Blas, in vain  
 Ye call back the past again!  
     The past is deaf to your prayer;  
 Out of the shadows of night  
 The world rolls into light; 65  
     It is daybreak everywhere.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In "Hymn to the Night" point out words or lines which seem to refer to the poet's recent bereavement, those which have a soothing effect upon his spirit, those which show his knowledge of ancient literature.
2. In "The Arsenal at Springfield" show how the idea of sound or music

is carried through the entire poem. In what two ways is the organ the most fitting instrument to which to compare the arsenal? What different ages and parts of the world are brought into the survey of war sounds? How does this strengthen his point? What great plea does he make for peace?

Vocabulary: symphonies (8), reverberations (12), diapason (28), celestial (32).

3. In "My Lost Youth" how many of the poet's recollections have to do with the sea? Which seem those that would impress a boy rather than a girl? Explain the meaning of the refrain. What are some of the dreams this boy might have been having? What experiences of Longfellow's life probably fulfilled some of those dreams?

4. What common link can you find between "My Lost Youth" and "The Discoverer of the North Cape"? Is Othere's story made interesting? Does it sound credible to you? What other discoveries have been made by Scandinavians?

5. What is the mood of "The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls"? What effect does the refrain have upon you? What is suggested by the lines:

nevermore

Returns the traveler to the shore.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

6. Words dealing with heat or cold have a strong tendency to be carried over into figurative uses, such as you employ in speaking of a *hot* argument or a *cool* head. The word *fervid* (page 505), which the poet uses to describe zeal, developed from one meaning to boil or glow. The more familiar *fervent* is milder and takes on more of the idea of glowing, while *fervid* comes nearer the idea of boiling. The noun *fervor*, which you will find on page 520, means intensity of feeling, usually heated feeling. Still later you will come across *hectic*, which means unhealthily feverish, while the *fervid* words are more often used in a pleasant sense. Did you notice *nonchalance* earlier in your reading? It means literally a state without heat, and is an apt term for a state of carefree unconcern.

### *For Ambitious Students*

7. Read "Footsteps of Angels" and compare it with "Hymn to the Night" as to the consolation the poet felt in the spirit of his dead wife.

8. Sum up the various attempts to establish world peace since Longfellow's day. What is the outlook at present for establishing world peace?

9. Assemble as many pictures as possible of King Alfred, the old Scandinavian Vikings and their ships, and of Arctic countries, to illustrate "The Discoverer of the North Cape."

10. Read Longfellow's "The Skeleton in Armor" and "The Saga of

King Olaf " and compare them with " The Discoverer of the North Cape." From which do you get the best picture of ancient Scandinavian life?

11. For modern exploration of Arctic and Antarctic regions read some of the following books: *Little America* and *Alone* by Richard Byrd, *North to the Orient* by Anne Lindbergh, *My Life as an Explorer* by Roald Amundsen, *North Pole* by R. E. Peary, *Hunting and Adventure in the Arctic* by Fridtjof Nansen, *The Friendly Arctic* by Vilhjalmar Steffansson. Most of these explorers have written several books on the subject.

12. If you are interested in the sea, begin making a collection of sea poems. You might like to find illustrations in copies of famous sea paintings.

13. Composition suggestions:

- a. Recollections of your childhood home
- b. Your attempts at exploration
- c. What Longfellow didn't know about modern warfare
- d. The possibility of establishing world peace
- e. A short lyric with a strongly rhythmic refrain

## OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES (1809-1894)

You have already met Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes on page 294, and have read some of his brilliant prose. Now we see him as a poet. His poetry differs from that of the other New Englanders in emphasizing the sparkle and gaiety of "society verse," of which he was a master. His phrases click into place with that precision and startling suitability which bring the sudden smile as we read. At times he produced serious poems of great beauty, but the lively mood is the one most closely identified with his name and the one which especially endears him to young people.

## OLD IRONSIDES

When Holmes was just twenty-one, he gained for himself permanent fame, and for the United States the preservation of a historic relic, by writing "Old Ironsides." This poem was a vigorous protest against the destruction of the frigate *Constitution*, which had defeated the *Guerrière* in the War of 1812. At first published in the *Boston Advertiser*, the verses were later copied in newspapers and scattered on broadsides all over the country. Such indignation was aroused that the ship was saved and became an object of great interest in the Charlestown Navy Yard,



just outside of Boston. In 1928, because of its rotting timbers, it was taken apart and restored to its original form to be kept as a national memorial.

Ay, tear her tattered ensign down!  
 Long has it waved on high,  
 And many an eye has danced to see  
 That banner in the sky;  
 Beneath it rung the battle shout, 5  
 And burst the cannon's roar; —  
 The meteor of the ocean air  
 Shall sweep the clouds no more.

Her decks, once red with heroes' blood,  
 Where knelt the vanquished foe, 10  
 When winds were hurrying o'er the flood,  
 And waves were white below,  
 No more shall feel the victor's tread,  
 Or know the conquered knee; —  
 The harpies of the shore shall pluck 15  
 The eagle of the sea!

Oh, better that her shattered hulk  
 Should sink beneath the wave;  
 Her thunders shook the mighty deep,  
 And there should be her grave; 20  
 Nail to the mast her holy flag,  
 Set every threadbare sail,  
 And give her to the god of storms,  
 The lightning and the gale!

#### MY AUNT

My aunt! my dear unmarried aunt!  
 Long years have o'er her flown;  
 Yet still she strains the aching clasp  
 That binds her virgin zone;  
 I know it hurts her, — though she looks  
 As cheerful as she can;  
 Her waist is ampler than her life,  
 For life is but a span.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| My aunt! my poor deluded aunt!               |    |
| Her hair is almost gray;                     | 10 |
| Why will she train that winter curl          |    |
| In such a springlike way?                    |    |
| How can she lay her glasses down,            |    |
| And say she reads as well,                   |    |
| When through a double convex lens            | 15 |
| She just makes out to spell?                 |    |
| Her father — grandpapa! forgive              |    |
| This erring lip its smiles —                 |    |
| Vowed she should make the finest girl        |    |
| Within a hundred miles;                      | 20 |
| He sent her to a stylish school;             |    |
| 'Twas in her thirteenth June;                |    |
| And with her, as the rules required,         |    |
| “Two towels and a spoon.”                    |    |
| They braced my aunt against a board,         | 25 |
| To make her straight and tall;               |    |
| They laced her up, they starved her down,    |    |
| To make her light and small;                 |    |
| They pinched her feet, they singed her hair, |    |
| They screwed it up with pins; —              | 30 |
| O never mortal suffered more                 |    |
| In penance for her sins.                     |    |
| But when my precious aunt was done,          |    |
| My grandsire brought her back;               |    |
| (By daylight, lest some rabid youth          | 35 |
| Might follow on the track;)                  |    |
| “Ah!” said my grandsire, as he shook         |    |
| Some powder in his pan,                      |    |
| “What could this lovely creature do          |    |
| Against a desperate man!”                    | 40 |
| Alas! nor chariot, nor barouche,             |    |
| Nor bandit cavalcade,                        |    |
| Tore from the trembling father’s arms        |    |
| His all-accomplished maid.                   |    |

38. powder in his pan: gunpowder in the hollow lock by which old guns were primed.

For her how happy had it been!  
 And Heaven had spared to me  
 To see one sad, ungathered rose  
 On my ancestral tree. 45

### THE LAST LEAF

This poem was suggested to Holmes by the appearance of old Major Thomas Melville, grandfather of Herman Melville, author of *Moby Dick*. It is interesting to know that the portrait of the old man and the suit of clothes described in the poem are both preserved in the Old Boston State House museum. This and the preceding poem, "My Aunt," were first published when Holmes was twenty-two years old.

I saw him once before,  
 As he passed by the door,  
 And again  
 The pavement stones resound  
 As he totters o'er the ground 5  
 With his cane.

They say that in his prime,  
 Ere the pruning knife of Time  
 Cut him down,  
 Not a better man was found 10  
 By the crier on his round  
 Through the town.

But now he walks the streets,  
 And he looks at all he meets  
 Sad and wan, 15  
 And he shakes his feeble head,  
 That it seems as if he said,  
 "They are gone."

The mossy marbles rest  
 On the lips that he has prest 20  
 In their bloom,  
 And the names he loved to hear  
 Have been carved for many a year  
 On the tomb.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES 511

My grandmamma has said — 25  
 Poor old lady, she is dead

Long ago —  
 That he had a Roman nose,  
 And his cheek was like a rose  
 In the snow. 30

But now his nose is thin,  
 And it rests upon his chin  
 Like a staff,  
 And a crook is in his back,  
 And a melancholy crack 35  
 In his laugh.

I know it is a sin  
 For me to sit and grin  
 At him here;  
 But the old three-cornered hat,  
 And the breeches, and all that, 40  
 Are so queer!

And if I should live to be  
 The last leaf upon the tree  
 In the spring, 45  
 Let them smile, as I do now,  
 At the old forsaken bough  
 Where I cling.

# THE BOYS

Dr. Holmes's wit and engaging personality made him highly popular in Boston as an after-dinner speaker and writer of poems for special occasions. He once said of himself:

"I'm a florist in verse, and what *would* people say  
 If I came to a banquet without my bouquet?"

Probably the best known of these poems is "The Boys," written for the thirtieth reunion of his own Harvard class of 1829, a class famous for the notable men it had produced.

Has there any old fellow got mixed with the boys?  
 If there has, take him out, without making a noise.  
 Hang the almanac's cheat and the catalogue's spite!  
 Old time is a liar! We're twenty tonight!

We're twenty! We're twenty! Who says we are more? 5  
 He's tipsy, — young jackanapes! — show him the door!  
 "Gray temples at twenty?" — Yes! *white* if we please;  
 Where the snowflakes fall thickest there's nothing can freeze!

Was it snowing I spoke of? Excuse the mistake!  
 Look close, — you will not see a sign of a flake! 10  
 We want some new garlands for those we have shed, —  
 And these are white roses in place of the red.

We've a trick, we young fellows, you may have been told,  
 Of talking (in public) as if we were old: —  
 That boy we call "Doctor," and this we call "Judge"; 15  
 It's a neat little fiction — of course it's all fudge.

That fellow's the "Speaker," — the one on the right;  
 "Mr. Mayor," my young one, how are you tonight?  
 That's our "Member of Congress," we say when we chaff;  
 There's the "Reverend" What's his name? — don't make me 20  
 laugh.

That boy with the grave mathematical look  
 Made believe he had written a wonderful book,  
 And the Royal Society thought it was *true*!  
 So they chose him right in; a good joke it was, too!

There's a boy, we pretend, with a three-decker brain, 25  
 That could harness a team with a logical chain;  
 When he spoke for our manhood in syllabled fire,  
 We called him "The Justice," but now he's "The Squire."

And there's a nice youngster of excellent pith, —  
 Fate tried to conceal him by naming him Smith; 30  
 But he shouted a song for the brave and the free, —  
 Just read on his medal, "My country," "of thee!"

30. **Smith:** Samuel Francis Smith, author of "America." Note that this is the only one called by name; and he is probably the only one whose name has ever been heard by the average high-school student of today. Anyone who is curious to identify the others can find them listed in the footnotes of the Cambridge edition of Holmes's poems.

You hear that boy laughing? — You think he's all fun;  
But the angels laugh, too, at the good he has done;  
The children laugh loud as they troop to his call, 35  
And the poor man that knows him laughs loudest of all!

Yes, we're boys, — always playing with tongue or with pen, —  
And I sometimes have asked, — Shall we ever be men?  
Shall we always be youthful, and laughing, and gay,  
Till the last dear companion drops smiling away? 40

Then here's to our boyhood, its gold and its gray!  
The stars of its winter, the dews of its May!  
And when we have done with our life-lasting toys,  
Dear Father, take care of thy children, THE BOYS!

## THE HEIGHT OF THE RIDICULOUS

I wrote some lines once on a time  
In wondrous merry mood,  
And thought, as usual, men would say  
They were exceeding good.

They were so queer, so very queer, 5  
I laughed as I would die;  
Albeit, in the general way,  
A sober man am I.

I called my servant, and he came;  
How kind it was of him 10  
To mind a slender man like me,  
He of the mighty limb!

"These to the printer," I exclaimed,  
And, in my humorous way,  
I added (as a trifling jest), 15  
"There'll be the devil to pay."

He took the paper, and I watched,  
And saw him peep within;  
At the first line he read, his face  
Was all upon the grin. 20

He read the next; the grin grew broad,  
 And shot from ear to ear;  
 He read the third; a chuckling noise  
 I now began to hear.

The fourth; he broke into a roar; 25  
 The fifth; his waistband split;  
 The sixth; he burst five buttons off,  
 And tumbled in a fit.

Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye,  
 I watched that wretched man, 30  
 And since, I never dare to write  
 As funny as I can.

### THE CHAMBERED NAUTILUS

You must not think of Dr. Holmes as merely "a funny man." This poem, which he preferred above all his writings and by which he hoped to be remembered, is one of the best-loved poems of aspiration in our national literature. He caught his idea from the shell of the nautilus, of which he had several specimens. In *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*, where this poem was originally published, the author describes "the ship of pearl" as "a series of enlarging compartments successively dwelt in by the animal that inhabits the shell, which is built in a widening spiral." The name "nautilus," meaning sailor, grew out of the old belief that the little creature sailed by the gauzy wings which are really its tentacles.

This is the ship of pearl, which, poets feign,  
 Sails the unshadowed main, —  
 The venturous bark that flings  
 On the sweet summer wind its purpled wings  
 In gulfs enchanted, where the Siren sings, 5  
 And coral reefs lie bare,  
 Where the cold sea maids rise to sun their streaming hair.

Its webs of living gauze no more unfurl;  
 Wrecked is the ship of pearl!  
 And every chambered cell, 10  
 Where its dim dreaming life was wont to dwell,

5. *Siren*: in classical mythology the sirens were sea nymphs near the west coast of Italy who lured mariners to their death by their enchanting songs.

As the frail tenant shaped his growing shell,  
Before thee lies revealed, —  
Its irised ceiling rent, its sunless crypt unsealed!

Year after year beheld the silent toil                 \*                 15  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,  
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
Built up its idle door,   20  
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more.

Thanks for the heavenly message brought by thee,  
 Child of the wandering sea,  
 Cast from her lap, forlorn!  
 From thy dead lips a clearer note is born 25  
 Than ever Triton blew from wreathèd horn!  
 While on mine ear it rings,  
 Through the deep caves of thought I hear a voice that sings: —

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul,  
As the swift seasons roll! 30  
Leave thy low-vaulted past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea! 35

26. **Triton:** ancient sea god whose lower part resembled a fish. He is usually represented as blowing a trumpet made of a sea shell.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why was the nickname "Old Ironsides" given to the *Constitution*? Who were the "harpies of the shore"? Compare the three possible fates of the vessel: the proposed dismantling, which called forth the poem; the fate preferred by Holmes; and what has actually happened to the ship. Which do you think the best fate?

**Vocabulary:** ensign (1), meteor (7), harpies (15).

2. "My Aunt" and "The Last Leaf" may be looked upon as companion pieces. What clearly indicated that they were written in Holmes's youth? What is similar in the tone of the two poems? Is either character



treated more sympathetically than the other? Do the poems seem disrespectful? What general comments on the relations between youth and age do they open up to you?

3. Find out whether Holmes's semiprophecy at the end of "The Last Leaf" was fulfilled by consulting the time chart on page 935, to see whether he outlived other writers of his generation.

4. Pick out from the humorous poems words, phrases, or rhymes which seem to snap into the right place with the suddenness and appropriateness that we call wit.

5. Point out phrases or lines in "The Chambered Nautilus" that show the delicate beauty of the shell. If possible bring a picture, or better yet, a specimen of a nautilus shell to class to see just how it is formed. Express in your own words the comparison made by the poet between the shell and man's life.

### *For Ambitious Students*

6. Look up the history of the *Constitution*, especially its fight with the *Guerrière*, and find out whether you think Holmes was justified in his indignation. Assemble pictures of these or similar old fighting vessels to show the class. How do they differ from modern armed ships?

7. How did the education of "my aunt" differ from that of a girl to-day? What change has come about in the position and interests of unmarried women since Holmes's day? Assemble pictures of ladies' costumes of the late eighteenth century, when "my aunt" was a girl, and of the eighteen-thirties, when Holmes was observing his aunt's appearance. *Godey's Lady's Book* is especially good for the latter.

8. Assemble pictures of men's costumes of the Revolutionary War and of the eighteen-thirties to see the difference in appearance between Holmes and the old man.

9. In the vein of "The Boys" write a prophecy for your class thirty years hence, or write reminiscences of your present school life as if you were looking back on it for a thirtieth reunion.

10. Class project. Imagine that your class is having its thirtieth reunion banquet. Identify different members with the characters of "The Boys." Let each make a few remarks appropriate to his character. Then let a student who has memorized the poem deliver it as the climax of the program.

11. Compare the idea of "The Chambered Nautilus" with Longfellow's "The Ladder of St. Augustine" and "Excelsior," and with the first stanza of Tennyson's "In Memoriam." Which of these four figures of speech for man's aspiration appeals to you most strongly?

12. "The Chambered Nautilus" has been made into a beautiful cantata by John S. Fearis. It is not too hard for high-school glee clubs. Have you heard it?

## JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819-1891)

A man deserves credit enough for attaining distinction in any one field; but when he can become notable in four or five, he fills us with wonder. Such an all-round man was James Russell Lowell, poet, humorist, political writer, literary critic, editor, college professor, lecturer, and diplomat. His achievement in poetry may have suffered because of his variety of interests, but his versatility has earned for Lowell the title of our most representative man of letters.

Few men in our restless country spend their lives in the house where they were born, yet this was among Lowell's many distinctions. Elmwood, the beautiful old mansion in its rich setting of greenery, was the outward symbol of how firmly the Lowell family was established in Cambridge, Massachusetts. To overtop the other famous Lowells is no small part of the record of this man.

Like Longfellow and Holmes, Lowell held for a long period of years a professorship at Harvard. Like Irving, he represented the United States in Spain and England. In addition to these achievements he was the pre-eminent literary critic of his day, the first editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and later a coeditor of the *North American Review*, two of our most notable magazines. Yet all these dignified positions did not prevent his vein of rich humor from bursting forth.

Lowell created Hosea Biglow, an illiterate but shrewd New England farmer, to give vent to his feelings on the Mexican War situation in 1848. These *Biglow Papers* have immortalized the Yankee twang. To add to the humor, the papers purported to have been edited by a minister, Hornerus Wilbur, Esq., in whose elaborate footnotes Lowell satirized pedantic learning. A second series during the War between the States continued to express in homely fashion the ideas of New Englanders concerning the vital topics of the war. Many parts of the *Biglow Papers* are crowded with references unintelligible to high-school students of today, but some of the verses will continue to delight young people for years to come. Among these "The Courtin'" is usually the favorite. The original version as here printed was later given some additional stanzas and printed in the second series of his poems in 1866, but many prefer the directness of this original version without its trimmings.

## THE COURTIN'

Zekle crep' up, quite unbeknown,  
An' peeked in thru the winder,  
An' there sot Huldy all alone,  
'ith no one nigh to hender.

Agin' the chimbly crooknecks hung, 5  
An' in amongst 'em rusted  
The ole queen's arm thet gran'ther Young  
Fetched back frum Concord busted.

The wannut logs shot sparkles out  
Toward the pootiest, bless her! 10  
An' leetle fires danced all about  
The chiny on the dresser.

The very room, coz she wuz in,  
Looked warm frum floor to ceilin',  
An' she looked full ez rosy agin 15  
Ez th' apples she wuz peelin'.

She heerd a foot an' knowed it, tu,  
A-raspin' on the scraper —  
All ways to once her feelin's flew 20  
Like sparks in burnt-up paper.

He kin' o' l'itered on the mat,  
Some doutfle o' the seekle;  
His heart kep' goin' pitypat,  
But hern went pity Zekle.

An' yet she gin her cheer a jerk 25  
Ez though she wished him funder,  
An' on her apples kep' to work  
Ez ef a wager spurred her.

" You want to see my Pa, I s'pose? " 30  
" Wal, no; I come designin' — "  
" To see my Ma? She's sprinklin' clo'es  
Agin tomorrow's i'nin'."

He stood a spell on one foot fust,  
Then stood a spell on tother.  
An' on which one he felt the wust 35  
He couldn't ha' told ye, nuther.

Sez he, " I'd better call agin; "  
 Sez she, " Think likely, *Mister*; "  
 The last word pricked him like a pin,  
 An' — wal, he up and kist her.

40

When Ma bimeby upon 'em slips,  
 Huldy sot pale ez ashes,  
 All kind o' smily round the lips  
 An' teary round the lashes.

Her blood riz quick, though, like the tide  
 Down to the Bay o' Fundy,  
 An' all I know is they wuz cried  
 In meetin', come nex' Sunday.

45

47. **they wuz cried:** The banns (that is, the announcement of their approaching marriage) were read in church.

## A FABLE FOR CRITICS

Lowell's skill as a literary critic, which found its serious expression in long and learned essays, here takes him into lively couplets, supposedly describing to Apollo the American writers of his day. The witty lines have behind them a keen perception of the strength and weakness of the authors described. He even points out his own vulnerable spot. From this selection you can realize Lowell's mental acumen without being confused by the many literary allusions and involved sentences of his essays. Except for Cooper, whom you doubtless have read, all the authors chosen in this selection are represented in this volume.

[*Emerson*] There comes Emerson first, whose rich words, every one,  
 Are like gold nails in temples to hang trophies on,  
 Whose prose is grand verse, while his verse, the Lord knows  
 Is some of it pr——. No, 'tis not even prose;  
 I'm speaking of meters; some poems have welled 5  
 From those rare depths of soul that have ne'er been excelled.  
 They're not epics, but that doesn't matter a pin,  
 In creating, the only hard thing's to begin;  
 A grass blade's no easier to make than an oak,  
 If you've once found the way, you've achieved the grand 10  
 stroke. . . .

[*Bryant*] There is Bryant, as quiet, as cool, and as dignified,  
 As a smooth silent iceberg, that never is ignifed,  
 Save when by reflection 'tis kindled o' nights  
 With a semblance of flame by the chill northern lights.  
 He may rank (Griswold says so) first bard of your nation, 15  
 (There's no doubt that he stands in supreme iceolation,)  
 Your topmost Parnassus he may set his heel on,  
 But no warm applauses come, peal following peal on —  
 He's too smooth and too polished to hang any zeal on. . . .  
 If he stir you at all, it is just, on my soul, 20  
 Like being stirred up with the very North Pole. . . .

[*Whittier*] There is Whittier, whose swelling and vehement heart  
 Strains the strait-breasted drab of the Quaker apart,  
 And reveals the live man, still supreme and erect,  
 Underneath the bemummying wrappers of sect; 25  
 There was ne'er a man born who had more of the swing  
 Of the true lyric bard and all that kind of thing;  
 And his failures arise (though he seems not to know it)  
 From the very same cause that has made him a poet, —  
 A fervor of mind which knows no separation 30  
 'Twixt simple excitement and pure inspiration. . . .  
 Then his grammar's not always correct, nor his rhymes,  
 And he's prone to repeat his own lyrics sometimes,  
 Not his best, though, for those are struck off at white heats  
 When the heart in his breast like a trip hammer beats, 35  
 And can ne'er be repeated again any more  
 Than they could have been carefully plotted before. . . .

[*Hawthorne*] There is Hawthorne, with genius so shrinking and rare  
 That you hardly at first see the strength that is there;  
 A frame so robust, with a nature so sweet, 40  
 So earnest, so graceful, so solid, so fleet,  
 Is worth a descent from Olympus to meet;  
 'Tis as if a rough oak that for ages had stood,  
 With his gnarled bony branches like ribs of the wood,  
 Should bloom after cycles o' struggle and scathe, 45

15. **Griswold**: American critic and editor of Lowell's day who was represented in the poem as leading the poets up to Apollo. 17. **Parnassus**: mountain in Greece, home of Apollo and the Muses. 42. **Olympus**: mountain in Greece, home of the gods. 45. **scathe**: misfortune.

With a single anemone trembly and rathe. . . .  
 When Nature was shaping him, clay was not granted  
 For making so full-sized a man as she wanted,  
 So, to fill out her model, a little she spared  
 From some finer-grained stuff for a woman prepared, 50  
 And she could not have hit a more excellent plan  
 For making him fully and perfectly man. . . .

[*Cooper*] Here's Cooper, who's written six volumes to show  
 He's as good as a lord: well, let's grant that he's so;  
 If a person prefer that description of praise, 55  
 Why, a coronet's certainly cheaper than bays;  
 But he need take no pains to convince us he's not  
 (*As his enemies say*) the American Scott.  
 Choose any twelve men, and let C. read aloud  
 That one of his novels of which he's most proud, 60  
 And I'll lay any bet that, without ever quitting  
 Their box, they'd be all, to a man, for acquitting.  
 He has drawn you one character, though, that is new,  
 One wild flower he's plucked that is wet with the dew  
 Of this fresh Western world, and, the thing not to mince, 65  
 He has done naught but copy it ill ever since;  
 His Indians, with proper respect be it said,  
 Are just Natty Bumppo daubed over with red. . . .  
 And the women he draws from one model don't vary,  
 All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie. . . . 70  
 Don't suppose I would underrate Cooper's abilities,  
 If I thought you'd do that I should feel very ill at ease;  
 The men who have given to *one* character life  
 And objective existence, are not very rife,  
 You may number them all, both prose writers and singers, 75  
 Without overrunning the bounds of your fingers. . . .

[*Poe and Longfellow*] There comes Poe, with his raven, like Barnaby  
 Rudge,  
 Three-fifths of him genius and two-fifths sheer fudge,

46. *rathe*: early in the season. 56. *bays*: In ancient Greece successful writers were crowned with bay leaves (laurel). 68. *Natty Bumppo*: the famous scout, whose nickname "Leatherstocking" designates the series of tales about his life. 77. *Barnaby Rudge*: a crazed youth in Dickens's novel by that name, who had a pet raven, as Poe had his poem "The Raven."

Who talks like a book of iambs and pentameters,  
 In a way to make people of common sense damn meters, 80  
 Who has written some things quite the best of their kind,  
 But the heart somehow seems all squeezed out by the mind,  
 Who — but heyday! What's this? Messieurs Mathews and Poe,  
 You mustn't fling mud balls at Longfellow so,  
 Does it make a man worse that his character's such 85  
 As to make his friends love him (as you think) too much?  
 Why, there is not a bard at this moment alive  
 More willing than he that his fellows should thrive;  
 While you are abusing him thus, even now  
 He would help either one of you out of a slough; 90  
 You may say that he's smooth and all that till you're hoarse,  
 But remember that elegance also is force;  
 After polishing granite as much as you will,  
 The heart keeps its tough old persistency still;  
 Deduct all you can, *that* still keeps you at bay; 95  
 Why, he'll live till men weary of Collins and Gray. . . .

[*Irving*] What? Irving? Thrice welcome, warm heart and fine brain,  
 You bring back the happiest spirit from Spain,  
 And the gravest sweet humor, that ever were there  
 Since Cervantes met death in his gentle despair. . . . 100  
 But allow me to speak what I honestly feel, —  
 To a true poet heart add the fun of Dick Steele,  
 Throw in all of Addison, *minus* the chill,  
 With the whole of that partnership's stock and good will,  
 Mix well, and while stirring, hum o'er as a spell, 105  
 The fine *old* English gentleman, simmer it well,  
 Sweeten just to your own private liking, then strain,  
 That only the finest and clearest remain,  
 Let it stand out of doors till a soul it receives  
 From the warm lazy sun loitering down through green leaves, 110  
 And you'll find a choice nature, not wholly deserving  
 A name either English or Yankee — just Irving. . . .

79. **iambs and pentameters:** See pages 712-713, for explanation of these meters.  
 83. **Mathews:** an editor and critic of the time who, like Poe, wrote severe criticism of Longfellow. 96. **Collins and Gray:** well-known English poets of the eighteenth century. 98. **from Spain:** Irving had just returned from a long sojourn as American minister to Spain. 100. **Cervantes:** (1547-1616), author of *Don Quixote*. 102, 103. **Steele . . . Addison:** famous essayists of eighteenth-century England, who together wrote the *Taller* and *Spectator* papers.

[*Holmes*] There's Holmes, who is matchless among you for wit,  
 A Leyden jar always full charged, from which flit  
 The electrical tingles of hit after hit; 115  
 In long poems 'tis painful sometimes, and invites  
 A thought of the way the new telegraph writes,  
 Which pricks down its little sharp sentences spitefully,  
 As if you'd got more than you'd title to rightfully,  
 And you find yourself hoping its wild father lightning 120  
 Would flame in for a second and give you a fright'ning. . . .

[*Lowell*] There is Lowell, who's striving Parnassus to climb  
 With a whole bale of *isms* tied together with rhyme;  
 He might get on alone, spite of brambles and boulders,  
 But he can't with that bundle he has on his shoulders. 125  
 The top of the hill he will ne'er come nigh reaching  
 Till he learns the distinction 'twixt singing and preaching;  
 His lyre has some chords that would ring pretty well,  
 But he'd rather by half make a drum of the shell,  
 And rattle away till he's old as Methusalem, 130  
 At the head of a march to the last new Jerusalem.

114. *Leyden jar*: an electricity condenser which can give strong shocks.  
 130. *Methusalem*: Methuselah, oldest man in the Bible (Gen. 5 : 27).

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. The most natural way to study "A Fable for Critics" is to discuss whether Lowell's comments seem justified from what you have been able to read by these individual authors. If you disagree with his impression of any of them, try to discover whether he was wrong or whether you have not yet read enough by the author to judge his work as a whole.

2. Point out good examples of Lowell's wit. Are there lines that make you laugh audibly, or do they just give you mental amusement? Find some examples of puns. Can you justify the use of puns in this type of poem? Where does exaggerated rhyme add to the humor?

3. Are the authors on the whole treated sympathetically, or satirically? If you had been any of these men, would you have felt angry at Lowell's comments on you? Discuss individual cases.

## For Ambitious Students

4. The manner of this poem is not hard to parody. Try writing "A Fable for Teachers," "A Fable for Students," or other type of humorous brief comments on persons or types with which you are familiar.



## THE VISION OF SIR LAUNFAL

Published the same year as the first series of the *Biglow Papers*, yet entirely different from them in treatment, is "The Vision of Sir Launfal," probably the best-known and most-quoted poem by Lowell. In it may be traced the influence of his wife, Maria White, to whom he had been married only a few years when he wrote this. She, too, was a poet and so ardent a believer in the brotherhood of man that she had succeeded in winning Lowell over from his scoffing attitude toward the abolitionists.

The author's own note of explanation is helpful: "According to the mythology of the romancers, the San Greal, or Holy Grail, was the cup out of which Jesus partook of the Last Supper with his disciples. It was brought into England by Joseph of Arimathea, and remained there, an object of pilgrimage and adoration, for many years in the keeping of his lineal descendants. It was incumbent upon those who had charge of it to be chaste in thought, word, and deed; but one of the keepers having broken this condition, the Holy Grail disappeared. From that time it was a favorite enterprise of the knights of Arthur's court to go in search of it. Sir Galahad was at last successful in finding it, as may be read in the seventeenth book of the *Romance of King Arthur*. Tennyson has made Sir Galahad the subject of one of the most exquisite of his poems. The plot (if I may give that name to anything so slight) of the following poem is my own, and to serve its purposes. I have enlarged the circle of competition in search of the miraculous cup in such a manner as to include, not only other persons than the heroes of the Round Table, but also a period of time subsequent to the supposed date of King Arthur's reign."

## PRELUDE TO PART FIRST

Over his keys the musing organist,  
 Beginning doubtfully and far away.  
 First lets his fingers wander as they list,  
 And builds a bridge from Dreamland for his lay:  
 Then, as the touch of his loved instrument 5  
 Gives hope and fervor, nearer draws his theme,  
 First guessed by faint, auroral flushes sent  
 Along the wavering vista of his dream.  
  
 Not only around our infancy  
 Doth Heaven with all its splendors lie; 10  
 Daily, with souls that cringe and plot,  
 We Sinais climb and know it not.

9. **Not . . . infancy:** The English poet, Wordsworth, had written, "Heaven lies about us in our infancy." Lowell disagreed that Heaven was limited to our infancy. 12. **Sinai:** Mount Sinai was the place where God gave Moses the Ten Commandments (Exodus, Chapter 19). Here it symbolizes communion with Heaven.

Over our manhood bend the skies;  
 Against our fallen and traitor lives  
 The great winds utter prophecies; 15  
 With our faint hearts the mountain strives;  
 Its arms outstretched, the druid wood  
 Waits with its benedicite;  
 And to our age's drowsy blood  
 Still shouts the inspiring sea. 20

Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us;  
 The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,  
 The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,  
 We bargain for the graves we lie in;  
 At the devil's booth are all things sold, 25  
 Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold;  
 For a cap and bells our lives we pay,  
 Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking:  
 'Tis Heaven alone that is given away,  
 'Tis only God may be had for the asking; 30  
 No price is set on the lavish summer;  
 June may be had by the poorest comer.

And what is so rare as a day in June?  
 Then, if ever, come perfect days;  
 Then Heaven tries earth if it be in tune, 35  
 And over it softly her warm ear lays;  
 Whether we look, or whether we listen,  
 We hear life murmur, or see it glisten;  
 Every clod feels a stir of might,  
 An instinct within it that reaches and towers, 40  
 And groping blindly above it for light,  
 Climbs to a soul in grass and flowers.  
 The flush of life may well be seen  
 Thrilling back over hills and valleys;  
 The cowslip startles in meadows green, 45  
 The buttercup catches the sun in its chalice,  
 And there's never a leaf or a blade too mean  
 To be some happy creature's palace;  
 The little bird sits at his door in the sun,

17. **druid**: ancient Celtic priest who held the oak sacred and worshiped in the woods. 18. **benedicite**: blessing. 27. **cap and bells**: the jingling headdress of a king's jester; in other words, mere superficial pleasures.

Atilt like a blossom among the leaves, 50  
 And lets his illumined being o'errun  
 With the deluge of summer it receives;  
 His mate feels the eggs beneath her wings,  
 And the heart in her dumb breast flutters and sings;  
 He sings to the wide world, and she to her nest, — 55  
 In the nice ear of Nature which song is the best?

Now is the high tide of the year,  
 And whatever of life hath ebbed away  
 Comes flooding back with a ripply cheer  
 Into every bare inlet and creek and bay; 60  
 Now the heart is so full that a drop overfills it;  
 We are happy now because God wills it;  
 No matter how barren the past may have been,  
 'Tis enough for us now that the leaves are green;  
 We sit in the warm shade and feel right well 65  
 How the sap creeps up and the blossoms swell;  
 We may shut our eyes, but we cannot help knowing  
 That skies are clear and grass is growing.  
 The breeze comes whispering in our ear,  
 That dandelions are blossoming near, 70  
 That maize has sprouted, that streams are flowing,  
 That the river is bluer than the sky,  
 That the robin is plastering his house hard by;  
 And if the breeze kept the good news back,  
 For other couriers we should not lack; 75  
 We could guess it all by yon heifer's lowing, —  
 And hark! how clear bold chanticleer,  
 Warmed with the new wine of the year,  
 Tells all in his lusty crowing!

Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how; 80  
 Everything is happy now,  
 Everything is upward striving;  
 'Tis as easy now for the heart to be true  
 As for grass to be green or skies to be blue, —  
 'Tis the natural way of living. 85  
 Who knows whither the clouds have fled?  
 In the unscarred heaven they leave no wake;

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL  | 527 |
| And the eyes forget the tears they have shed,<br>The heart forgets its sorrow and ache;<br>The soul partakes the season's youth,  | 90  |
| And the sulphurous rifts of passion and woe<br>Lie deep 'neath a silence pure and smooth,<br>Like burnt-out craters healed with snow.<br>What wonder if Sir Launfal now<br>Remembered the keeping of his vow? | 95  |

## PART FIRST

### I

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| " My golden spurs now bring to me,<br>And bring to me my richest mail,<br>For tomorrow I go over land and sea<br>In search of the Holy Grail.<br>Shall never a bed for me be spread,<br>Nor shall a pillow be under my head,<br>Till I begin my vow to keep;<br>Here on the rushes will I sleep,<br>And perchance there may come a vision true<br>Ere day create the world anew." | 100 |
| Slowly Sir Launfal's eyes grew dim;<br>Slumber fell like a cloud on him,<br>And into his soul the vision flew.  | 105 |

### II

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| The crows flapped over by twos and threes;<br>In the pool drownd the cattle up to their knees;<br>The little birds sang as if it were<br>The one day of summer in all the year;<br>And the very leaves seemed to sing on the trees;<br>The castle alone in the landscape lay<br>Like an outpost of winter, dull and gray;<br>'Twas the proudest hall in the North Countree,<br>And never its gates might opened be<br>Save to lord or lady of high degree; | 110 |
|  | 115 |

103. *rushes*: This is inside the castle, not outside. The floors were covered with rushes. 109. *The crows . . . threes*: This is the beginning of the vision, which ends with line 327 of Part Second.

Summer besieged it on every side,  
 But the churlish stone her assaults defied; 120  
 She could not scale the chilly wall,  
 Though around it for leagues her pavilions tall  
 Stretched left and right,  
 Over the hills and out of sight.  
     Green and broad was every tent, 125  
     And out of each a murmur went  
 Till the breeze fell off at night.

## III

The drawbridge dropped with a surly clang,  
 And through the dark arch a charger sprang,  
 Bearing Sir Launfal, the maiden knight, 130  
 In his gilded mail, that flamed so bright  
 It seemed the dark castle had gathered all  
 Those shafts the fierce sun had shot over its wall  
     In his siege of three hundred summers long,  
 And, binding them all in one blazing sheaf, 135  
     Had cast them forth; so, young and strong,  
 And lightsome as a locust leaf,  
 Sir Launfal flashed forth in his unscarred mail,  
 To seek in all climes for the Holy Grail.

## IV

It was morning on hill and stream and tree, 140  
     And morning in the young knight's heart;  
 Only the castle moodily  
 Rebuffed the gifts of the sunshine free,  
     And gloomed by itself apart;  
 The season brimmed all other things up 145  
 Full as the rain fills the pitcher plant's cup.

## V

As Sir Launfal made morn through the darksome gate,  
     He was 'ware of a leper, crouched by the same,  
 Who begged with his hand and moaned as he sate;  
     And a loathing over Sir Launfal came. 150

'The sunshine went out of his soul with a thrill,  
 The flesh 'neath his armor 'gan shrink and crawl,  
 And midway its leap his heart stood still  
 Like a frozen waterfall;  
 For this man, so foul and bent of stature, 155  
 Rasped harshly against his dainty nature,  
 And seemed the one blot on the summer morn, —  
 So he tossed him a piece of gold in scorn.

## VI

The leper raised not the gold from the dust:  
 " Better to me the poor man's crust, 160  
 Better the blessing of the poor,  
 Though I turn me empty from his door;  
 That is no true alms which the hand can hold;  
 He gives nothing but worthless gold  
 Who gives from a sense of duty; 165  
 But he who gives but a slender mite,  
 And gives to that which is out of sight,  
 That thread of the all-sustaining Beauty  
 Which runs through all and doth all unite, —  
 The hand cannot clasp the whole of his alms, 170  
 The heart outstretches its eager palms,  
 For a god goes with it and makes it store  
 To the soul that was starving in darkness before."

## PRELUDE TO PART SECOND

Down swept the chill wind from the mountain peak,  
 From the snow five thousand summers old; 175  
 On open wold and hilltop bleak  
 It had gathered all the cold,  
 And whirled it like sleet on the wanderer's cheek;  
 It carried a shiver everywhere  
 From the unleafed boughs and pastures bare; 180  
 The little brook heard it and built a roof  
 'Neath which he could house him, winterproof;  
 All night by the white stars' frosty gleams  
 He groined his arches and matched his beams;  
 Slender and clear were his crystal spars 185

As the lashes of light that trim the stars;  
 He sculptured every summer delight  
 In his halls and chambers out of sight;  
 Sometimes his tinkling waters slipped  
 Down through a frost-leaved forest crypt, 190  
 Long, sparkling aisles of steel-stemmed trees  
 Bending to counterfeit a breeze;  
 Sometimes the roof no fretwork knew  
 But silvery mosses that downward grew;  
 Sometimes it was carved in sharp relief 195  
 With quaint arabesques of ice-fern leaf;  
 Sometimes it was simply smooth and clear  
 For the gladness of heaven to shine through, and here  
 He had caught the nodding bulrush tops  
 And hung them thickly with diamond drops, 200  
 That crystallised the beams of moon and sun,  
 And made a star of every one.  
 No mortal builder's most rare device  
 Could match this winter palace of ice;  
 'Twas as if every image that mirrored lay 205  
 In his depths serene through the summer day,  
 Each fleeting shadow of earth and sky,  
     Lest the happy model should be lost,  
 Had been mimicked in fairy masonry  
     By the elfin builders of the frost. 210

Within the hall are song and laughter;  
     The cheeks of Christmas grow red and jolly;  
 And sprouting is every corbel and rafter  
     With lightsome green of ivy and holly;  
 Through the deep gulf of the chimney wide 215  
 Wallows the Yule log's roaring tide;  
 The broad flame pennons droop and flap  
     And belly and tug as a flag in the wind;  
 Like a locust shrills the imprisoned sap,  
     Hunted to death in its galleries blind; 220  
 And swift little troops of silent sparks,  
 Now pausing, now scattering away as in fear,  
 Go threading the soot forest's tangled darks  
     Like herds of startled deer.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL                            | 531 |
| But the wind without was eager and sharp;       | 225 |
| Of Sir Launfal's gray hair it makes a harp,     |     |
| And rattles and wrings                          |     |
| The icy strings,                                |     |
| Singing, in dreary monotone,                    |     |
| A Christmas carol of its own,                   | 230 |
| Whose burden still, as he might guess,          |     |
| Was " Shelterless, shelterless, shelterless! "  |     |
| The voice of the seneschal flared like a torch  |     |
| As he shouted the wanderer away from the porch, |     |
| And he sat in the gateway and saw all night     | 235 |
| The great hall fire, so cheery and bold,        |     |
| Through the window slits of the castle old,     |     |
| Build out its piers of ruddy light              |     |
| Against the drift of the cold.                  |     |

## PART SECOND

### I

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| There was never a leaf on bush or tree,          | 240 |
| The bare boughs rattled shudderingly;            |     |
| The river was dumb and could not speak,          |     |
| For the weaver Winter its shroud had spun;       |     |
| A single crow on the treetop bleak               |     |
| From his shining feathers shed off the cold sun; | 245 |
| Again it was morning, but shrunk and cold,       |     |
| As if her veins were sapless and old,            |     |
| And she rose up decrepitiy                       |     |
| For a last dim look at earth and sea.            |     |

### II

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Sir Launfal turned from his own hard gate,     | 250 |
| For another heir in his earldom sate;          |     |
| An old, bent man, worn out and frail,          |     |
| He came back from seeking the Holy Grail;      |     |
| Little he recked of his earldom's loss;        |     |
| No more on his surcoat was blazoned the cross, | 255 |
| But deep in his soul the sign he wore,         |     |
| The badge of the suffering and the poor.       |     |



## III

Sir Launfal's raiment thin and spare  
 Was idle mail 'gainst the barbed air,  
 For it was just at the Christmas time; 260  
 So he mused, as he sat, of a sunnier clime,  
 And sought for a shelter from cold and snow  
 In the light and warmth of long ago;  
 He sees the snakelike caravan crawl  
 O'er the edge of the desert, black and small, 265  
 Then nearer and nearer, till, one by one,  
 He can count the camels in the sun,  
 As over the red-hot sands they pass  
 To where, in its slender necklace of grass,  
 The little spring laughed and leaped in the shade, 270  
 And with its own self like an infant played,  
 And waved its signal of palms.

## IV

" For Christ's sweet sake, I beg an alms " —  
 The happy camels may reach the spring,  
 But Sir Launfal sees naught save the gruesome thing, 275  
 The leper, lank as the rain-blanchèd bone,  
 That cowers beside him, a thing as lone  
 And white as the ice isles of Northern seas  
 In the desolate horror of his disease.

## V

And Sir Launfal said, " I behold in thee 280  
 An image of Him who died on the tree.  
 Thou also hast had thy crown of thorns,  
 Thou also hast had the world's buffets and scorns,  
 And to thy life were not denied  
 The wounds in the hands and feet and side. 285  
 Mild Mary's Son, acknowledge me;  
 Behold, through him, I give to Thee! "

## VI

Then the soul of the leper stood up in his eyes  
 And looked at Sir Launfal, and straightway he  
 Remembered in what a haughtier guise 290  
 He had flung an alms to leprosie,  
 When he girt his young life up in gilded mail  
 And set forth in search of the Holy Grail.  
 The heart within him was ashes and dust;  
 He parted in twain his single crust, 295  
 He broke the ice on the streamlet's brink,  
 And gave the leper to eat and drink.  
 'Twas a moldy crust of coarse, brown bread,  
 'Twas water out of a wooden bowl, —  
 Yet with fine wheaten bread was the leper fed, 300  
 And 'twas red wine he drank with his thirsty soul.

## VII

As Sir Launfal mused with a downcast face,  
 A light shone roundabout the place;  
 The leper no longer crouched at his side,  
 But stood before him glorified, 305  
 Shining and tall and fair and straight  
 As the pillar that stood by the Beautiful Gate, —  
 Himself the Gate whereby men can  
 Enter the temple of God and Man.

## VIII

His words were shed softer than leaves from the pine, 310  
 And they fell on Sir Launfal as snows on the brine,  
 That mingle their softness and quiet in one  
 With the shaggy unrest they float down upon;  
 And the voice that was calmer than silence said,  
 "Lo, it is I, be not afraid! 315  
 In many climes, without avail,

307. *the Beautiful Gate*: a gate of the temple at Jerusalem (Acts 3 : 2).  
 308. *Himself the Gate*: Christ said, "I am the door." The leper had become the Christ.

Thou hast spent thy life for the Holy Grail;  
 Behold, it is here, — this cup which thou  
 Didst fill at the streamlet for me but now;  
 This crust is my body broken for thee; 320  
 This water his blood that died on the tree;  
 The Holy Supper is kept, indeed,  
 In whatso we share with another's need;  
 Not what we give, but what we share,  
 For the gift without the giver is bare; 325  
 Who gives himself with his alms feeds three,  
 Himself, his hungering neighbor, and me."

## IX

Sir Launfal awoke as from a swoond;  
 "The Grail in my castle here is found!  
 Hang my idle armor up on the wall; 330  
 Let it be the spider's banquet hall;  
 He must be fenced with stronger mail  
 Who would seek and find the Holy Grail."

## X

The castle gate stands open now,  
 And the wanderer is welcome to the hall 335  
 As the hangbird is to the elm tree bough;  
 No longer scowl the turrets tall,  
 The Summer's long siege at last is o'er;  
 When the first poor outcast went in at the door,  
 She entered with him in disguise, 340  
 And mastered the fortress by surprise;  
 There is no spot she loves so well on ground,  
 She lingers and smiles there the whole year round;  
 The meanest serf on Sir Launfal's land  
 Has hall and bower at his command; 345  
 And there's no poor man in the North Countree  
 But is lord of the earldom as much as he.

322. **Holy Supper:** the Last Supper of Christ and His disciples, commemorated in the communion service of Christian churches.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

*Prelude to Part First*

1. How does the organist compare with the poet approaching his theme? with yourself writing a theme for school?
2. Why are the first ideas called "auroral flushes"?
3. What proof does the poet give that we have contacts with Heaven all through our lives?
4. What kind of things must we pay for and what things are given away in this world?
5. In the famous description of the June day, pick out the details that suggest awakening and teeming life.
6. How would you answer the question in line 56?
7. What is the effect of such a day upon a person?

*Part First*

8. Look up the part played by the vigil in the training of a knight (E. M. Tappan, *When Knights Were Bold*).
9. Beginning with stanza II, the rest of the poem to Part Second, stanza IX, is the vision Sir Launfal had on the night of his vigil. Describe the way he appears in the vision as he goes forth on his quest. You would enjoy reading a similar description of Sir Lancelot in Tennyson's "The Lady of Shalott," Part III.
10. Why did the leper reject Sir Launfal's gift?
11. Have you read any other works in which lepers figure? *Ben Hur* by Lew Wallace and Stevenson's "Father Damien" are notable examples.

*Prelude to Part Second*

12. Mark the words and phrases you think especially vivid in the famous description of winter.
13. Give examples from your own observation of how the frost mimics the images of summer.
14. Explain the tradition of the Yule log and other medieval Christmas customs which have come down to our own day. See Irving's "Christmas Sketches" in *The Sketch Book*.
15. Point out the various figures of speech the poet uses in describing the great hall fire.
16. Vocabulary: wold (176), groined (184), crypt (190), arabesques (196).

*Part Second*

17. Part Second is in direct contrast to Part First. See how many points of contrast you can find.
18. Why does the leper accept Sir Launfal's gift this time?

19. What miraculous transformation takes place? Explain the speech of the transformed leper in your own words.

20. Henry van Dyke's *The Story of the Other Wise Man* expresses a similar idea. Have you read it?

21. What effect did the vision have on Sir Launfal at the end?

## *Three Original Geniuses*

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

Edgar Allan Poe is probably the least local of any of our writers. Scarcely a story or poem of his reflects a distinctly American setting, but rather an Old World background or "the misty mid-region of Weir" — the pure realm of the imagination.

You have already realized, through Poe's stories, his curious ability to present unpleasant or even diseased mental states with gripping intensity. In his poetry he often enthralls the reader, but with even greater emotional hold, through the effect of rhythm. Poe was a master of verse form. The same mathematical quality in his mind which made him solve cryptograms, as in "The Gold Bug," led him to weigh and balance his syllables, calculate the effect of his choice of consonants, and so produce a flowing richness of sound which makes the poetry of his Northern contemporaries often sound thin or unmusical. His poem "The Bells" is as pure an example of a "sound" poem as there is in our language. Here he reproduces the tonal effects of the silver, golden, brazen, and iron bells, largely by choice of consonants combined with certain vowels. One of his favorite devices is onomatopoeia, the use of a word whose sound suggests its meaning, such as "tintinnabulation" of the bells. In another familiar poem, "Annabel Lee," the frequent repetition of *n* and *l* would seldom be offered by a reader as the reason for his enjoyment of it, yet that has much to do with its melodious flow. All the devices of the poet for creating sound and mood effects were as carefully studied by Poe as color mixing is studied by the painter. We might prefer to think that this poetry rolled out without effort from the inspired imagination of the poet, but unfortunately the poet has told us with his own pen how he patterned his poems with careful deliberation and selection. The resulting impression, however, is one of sheer beauty and music.

In Emerson's poetry we saw that sound was subordinate to meaning. Poe makes meaning subordinate to sound. You will not find in Poe any of the philosophy of Emerson, the spiritual quality of Whittier, or the moral applications of Bryant and Longfellow, but, instead, haunting strains of music which insinuate themselves into your memory.

## TO HELEN

This is one of the earliest poems by Poe, inspired by his youthful admiration for Mrs. Jane Stith Stannard of Richmond, whom he later identified as "the first purely ideal love of my soul." Two lines of this poem are frequently quoted. Do you recognize them?

Helen, thy beauty is to me  
Like those Nicaean barks of yore,  
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,  
The weary, wayworn wanderer bore  
To his own native shore. 5

On desperate seas long wont to roam,  
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,  
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home  
To the glory that was Greece  
And the grandeur that was Rome. 10

Lo! in yon brilliant window niche  
How statuelike I see thee stand,  
The agate lamp within thy hand!  
Ah, Psyche, from the regions which  
Are Holy Land! 15

2. **Nicaean**: pertaining to Nicaea, a town of Asia Minor. Poe probably had no reason for referring to this town especially, but chose the word for its sound and its suggestion of a picturesque ancient ship. 8. **Naiad**: in Greek mythology, a water nymph. 14. **Psyche**: the Greek word for "soul" or "mind," derived from the myth of the Greek maiden beloved of Cupid. Poe uses the word again in "Ullume," page 544.

## THE BELLS

## I

Hear the sledges with the bells,  
Silver bells!  
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!  
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,  
In the icy air of night! 5  
While the stars, that oversprinkle  
All the heavens, seem to twinkle

With a crystalline delight;  
 Keeping time, time, time,  
 In a sort of runic rhyme, 10  
**To** the tintinnabulation that so musically wells  
 From the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
 Bells, bells, bells, —  
 From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

## II

Hear the mellow wedding bells, 15  
 Golden bells!  
**What** a world of happiness their harmony foretells!  
 Through the balmy air of night  
 How they ring out their delight!  
 From the molten-golden notes, 20  
 And all in tune,  
 What a liquid ditty floats  
 To the turtledove that listens, while she gloats  
 On the moon!  
 Oh, from out the sounding cells, 25  
**What** a gush of euphony voluminously wells!  
 How it swells!  
 How it dwells  
 On the future! how it tells  
 Of the rapture that impels 30  
 To the swinging and the ringing  
 Of the bells, bells, bells,  
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
 Bells, bells, bells —  
 To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells! 35

## III

Hear the loud alarum bells,  
 Brazen bells!  
**What** a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!  
 In the startled ear of night  
 How they scream out their affright! 40  
 Too much horrified to speak,

They can only shriek, shriek,  
Out of tune,  
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,  
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire, 45  
Leaping higher, higher, higher,  
With a desperate desire,  
And a resolute endeavor  
Now — now to sit or never,  
By the side of the pale-faced moon. 50  
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!  
What a tale their terror tells  
Of despair!  
How they clang, and clash, and roar!  
What a horror they outpour 55  
On the bosom of the palpitating air!  
Yet the ear it fully knows,  
By the twanging  
And the clanging,  
How the danger ebbs and flows; 60  
Yet the ear distinctly tells,  
In the jangling  
And the wrangling,  
How the danger sinks and swells, —  
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells, 65  
Of the bells,  
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,  
Bells, bells, bells —  
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

## IV

Hear the tolling of the bells, 70  
Iron bells!  
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!  
In the silence of the night  
How we shiver with affright  
At the melancholy menace of their tone! 75  
For every sound that floats  
From the rust within their throats  
Is a groan.  
And the people — ah, the people,



|   |     |
|---|-----|
| They that dwell up in the steeple,            | 80  |
| All alone,                                    |     |
| And who tolling, tolling, tolling             |     |
| In that muffled monotone,                     |     |
| Feel a glory in so rolling                    |     |
| On the human heart a stone —                  | 85  |
| They are neither man nor woman,               |     |
| They are neither brute nor human,             |     |
| They are ghouls:                              |     |
| And their king it is who tolls;               |     |
| And he rolls, rolls, rolls,                   | 90  |
| Rolls   |     |
| A paean from the bells;                       |     |
| And his merry bosom swells                    |     |
| With the paean of the bells,                  |     |
| And he dances, and he yells:                  | 95  |
| Keeping time, time, time,                     |     |
| In a sort of runic rhyme,                     |     |
| To the paean of the bells,                    |     |
| Of the bells:                                 |     |
| Keeping time, time, time,                     | 100 |
| In a sort of runic rhyme,                     |     |
| To the throbbing of the bells,                |     |
| Of the bells, bells, bells —                  |     |
| To the sobbing of the bells;                  |     |
| Keeping time, time, time,                     | 105 |
| As he knells, knells, knells,                 |     |
| In a happy runic rhyme,                       |     |
| To the rolling of the bells,                  |     |
| Of the bells, bells, bells:                   |     |
| To the tolling of the bells,                  | 110 |
| Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,            |     |
| Bells, bells, bells —                         |     |
| To the moaning and the groaning of the bells. |     |

## THE RAVEN

Poe had very definite beliefs as to the nature of poetry — that its essence should be beauty and that sadness was the mood most in keeping with poetic beauty. Therefore, he said there was no subject more fitting for poetry than the death of a beautiful woman. Uninformed persons

have sometimes thought that this poem grew out of Poe's sorrow for the death of his own wife; but unfortunately for that theory, the poem was published almost two years before his wife died. Since she was an invalid for many years, however, there must have been a dread in Poe's mind of losing her which stamped its impress upon the quality of the poem. Many of the effects of the poem were built up quite deliberately, Poe tells us, by the use of sonorous words, alliteration, internal rhyme, and repetition.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore, —  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.  
" 'Tis some visitor," I muttered, " tapping at my chamber door:   5  
    Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow; — vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow — sorrow for the lost Lenore,   10  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore:  
    Nameless here forevermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me — filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating   15  
" 'Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door,  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door:  
    This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
" Sir," said I, " or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;   20  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,  
That I scarce was sure I heard you " — here I opened wide the  
    door: —  
    Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,   25  
    fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,

And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore?"  
 This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore":  
 Merely this and nothing more. 30

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
 Soon again I heard a tapping somewhat louder than before.  
 "Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
 Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore;  
 Let my heart be still a moment and this mystery explore: 35  
 'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
 In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.  
 Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed he;  
 But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door, 40  
 Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door:  
 Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling  
 By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore, —  
 "Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure 45  
 no craven,  
 Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the nightly shore:  
 Tell me what thy lordly name is on the night's Plutonian shore! "  
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marveled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
 Though its answer little meaning — little relevancy bore; 50  
 For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
 Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door,  
 Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,  
 With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on the placid bust, spoke only 55  
 That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.  
 Nothing further then he uttered, not a feather then he fluttered,  
 Till I scarcely more than muttered, — "Other friends have flown  
 before;

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."  
 Then the bird said, "Nevermore." 60

41. *Pallas*: Pallas Athene, Greek goddess of wisdom, called Minerva by the Romans. 47. *Plutonian*: referring to Pluto, the god who in Greek mythology presided over the regions of the dead.

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
 "Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,  
 Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful disaster  
 Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore:  
 Till the dirges of his hope that melancholy burden bore 65  
 Of 'Never — nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,  
 Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door;  
 Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
 Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore, 70  
 What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore  
 Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
 To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;  
 This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining 75  
 On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er,  
 But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer  
 Swung by seraphim whose footfalls tinkled on the tufted floor. 80  
 "Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee — by these angels he  
 hath sent thee  
 Respite — respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore!  
 Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe, and forget this lost Lenore! "  
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil! prophet still, if bird or devil! 85  
 Whether tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,  
 Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted —  
 On this home by horror haunted — tell me truly, I implore:  
 Is there — *is* there balm in Gilead? — tell me — tell me, I implore! "  
 Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore." 90

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil — prophet still, if bird or devil!  
 By that heaven that bends above us, by that God we both adore,  
 Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,

82. *nepenthe*: a drug that destroys pain and brings forgetfulness. 89. *balm in Gilead*: a healing lotion made in Gilead, a part of ancient Palestine (Jer. 8 : 22). It has become a common expression meaning relief for affliction. 93. *Aidenn*: from the Arabic for Eden.

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore:  
 Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore! " 95  
 Quoth the Raven, " Nevermore."

" Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend! " I shrieked, up-  
 starting:

" Get thee back into the tempest and the night's Plutonian shore!  
 Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
 Leave my loneliness unbroken! quit the bust above my door! 100  
 Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off my  
 door! "

Quoth the Raven, " Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting  
 On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
 And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming, 105  
 And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor:  
 And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
 Shall be lifted — nevermore!

## ULALUME

Here is a poem that really did follow the death of Poe's wife, for it was published before the first anniversary of her loss after he had suffered a critical illness. It suggests a deeply despairing and almost disordered mind. Do not try to understand the exact meaning of every line, for it has baffled even the critics. Read it rather for the remarkable creation of a mood and the sonorous roll of the lines.

The skies they were ashen and sober;  
 The leaves they were crispèd and sere —  
 The leaves they were withering and sere;  
 It was night in the lonesome October  
 Of my most immemorial year;  
 It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,  
 In the misty mid-region of Weir —  
 It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,  
 In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

5

6, 7, 16. Auber . . . Weir . . . Yaanek: These are all imaginary names made up by Poe for their sound and suggestive effect.

Here once, through an alley Titanic 10  
     Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul —  
     Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.  
 These were days when my heart was volcanic  
     As the scoriac rivers that roll —  
     As the lavas that restlessly roll 15  
 Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek  
     In the ultimate climes of the pole,  
 That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek  
     In the realms of the boreal pole.  
  
 Our talk had been serious and sober, 20  
     But our thoughts they were palsied and sere,  
     Our memories were treacherous and sere,  
 For we knew not the month was October,  
     And we marked not the night of the year —  
     (Ah, night of all nights in the year!) 25  
 We noted not the dim lake of Auber  
     (Though once we had journeyed down here),  
 Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,  
     Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.  
  
 And now, as the night was senescent 30  
     And star dials pointed to morn,  
     As the star dials hinted of morn,  
 At the end of our path a liquescent  
     And nebulous luster was born,  
     Out of which a miraculous crescent 35  
     Arose with a duplicate horn,  
 Astarte's bediamonded crescent  
     Distinct with its duplicate horn.  
  
 And I said — "She is warmer than Dian:  
     She rolls through an ether of sighs, 40  
     She revels in a region of sighs:  
 She has seen that the tears are not dry on  
     These cheeks, where the worm never dies,  
 And has come past the stars of the Lion

10. **Titanic**: referring to the Titans, a race of giants in Greek mythology. Here it suggests vastness. 11. **cypress**: a tree symbolizing mourning because so frequently planted in graveyards. 12. **Psyche**: See note on page 537. 37. **Astarte**: the Phoenician goddess of the moon. 39. **Dian**: Diana, the Roman goddess of the moon. 44. **Lion**: a northern constellation pictured as a lion.

To point us the path to the skies, 45  
 To the Lethean peace of the skies:  
 Come up, in despite of the Lion,  
 To shine on us with her bright eyes:  
 Come up through the lair of the Lion,  
 With love in her luminous eyes." 50

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,  
 Said — " Sadly this star I mistrust,  
 Her pallor I strangely mistrust:  
 Oh, hasten! — oh, let us not linger!  
 Oh, fly — let us fly! — for we must." 55  
 In terror she spoke, letting sink her  
 Wings till they trailed in the dust;  
 In agony sobbed, letting sink her  
 Plumes till they trailed in the dust,  
 Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust. 60

I replied — " This is nothing but dreaming:  
 Let us on by this tremulous light!  
 Let us bathe in this crystalline light!  
 Its sibyllic splendor is beaming  
 With hope and in beauty tonight: 65  
 See, it flickers up the sky through the night!  
 Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,  
 And be sure it will lead us aright:  
 We safely may trust to a gleaming  
 That cannot but guide us aright, 70  
 Since it flickers up to heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,  
 And tempted her out of her gloom,  
 And conquered her scruples and gloom;  
 And we passed to the end of the vista, 75  
 But were stopped by the door of a tomb,  
 By the door of a legended tomb;  
 And I said — " What is written, sweet sister,  
 On the door of this legended tomb? "  
 She replied — " Ulalume — Ulalume — 80  
 'Tis the vault of thy lost Ulalume! "

46. *Lethean*: referring to Lethe, the river of forgetfulness in the Greek regions of the dead. 64. *sibyllic*: pertaining to a sibyl, in Greek mythology a prophetess.

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober  
 As the leaves that were crispèd and sere,  
 As the leaves that were withering and sere,  
 And I cried — “ It was surely October 85  
 On *this* very night of last year  
 That I journeyed — I journeyed down here,  
 That I brought a dread burden down here:  
 On this night of all nights in the year,  
 Ah, what demon has tempted me here? 90  
 Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber —  
 This misty mid-region of Weir —  
 Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,  
 This ghoulish wood-land of Weir.”

ANNABEL LEE

It was many and many a year ago,  
In a kingdom by the sea,  
That a maiden there lived whom you may know  
By the name of Annabel Lee;  
And this maiden she lived with no other thought  
Than to love and be loved by me.

*She* was a child and *I* was a child,  
In this kingdom by the sea;  
But we loved with a love that was more than love,  
I and my Annabel Lee;  
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven  
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,  
 In this kingdom by the sea,  
 A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling 15  
 My beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 So that her highborn kinsmen came  
 And bore her away from me,  
 To shut her up in a sepulcher  
 In this kingdom by the sea. 20



The angels, not half so happy in heaven,  
 Went envying her and me;  
 Yes, that was the reason (as all men know,  
 In this kingdom by the sea)  
 That the wind came out of the cloud by night, 25  
 Chilling and killing my Annabel Lee.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love  
 Of those who were older than we,  
 Of many far wiser than we;  
 And neither the angels in heaven above, 30  
 Nor the demons down under the sea,  
 Can ever dissever my soul from the soul  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee:

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee; 35  
 And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes  
 Of the beautiful Annabel Lee;  
 And so, all the nighttide, I lie down by the side  
 Of my darling, my darling, my life and my bride  
 In her sepulchre there by the sea, 40  
 In her tomb by the sounding sea.

### EL DORADO

"El Dorado" was one of the last poems written by Poe, and strikes a more vigorous note than the preceding ones. He had once more made severe resolutions about his habits and was planning to be married a second time. It is possible that he may have had definite visions of an ideal toward which he was striving.

Gaily bedight,  
 A gallant knight,  
 In sunshine and in shadow,  
 Had journeyed long,  
 Singing a song, 5  
 In search of El Dorado.

6. **El Dorado**: literally, "the gilded," an imaginary place abounding in gold, supposed by the sixteenth-century Spaniards to be located in America. It has come to stand for any place abounding in wealth and opportunity.

But he grew old,  
This knight so bold,  
And o'er his heart a shadow  
Fell as he found 10  
No spot of ground  
That looked like El Dorado.

And, as his strength  
Failed him at length,  
He met a pilgrim shadow; 15  
"Shadow," said he,  
"Where can it be,  
This land of El Dorado?"

"Over the Mountains  
Of the Moon, 20  
Down the Valley of the Shadow,  
Ride, boldly ride,"  
The shade replied,  
"If you seek for El Dorado!"

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

*The Bells*

1. Since this is pre-eminently a sound poem, the best way to study it is to read it aloud. Reading it with the eye alone is like reading a piece of sheet music in the same way.

2. Observe carefully the use of the liquid consonants — *l, m, n*. What other consonants appear with notable frequency? What difference can you note in the use of the vowels for the different bells? How does this selection of vowels and consonants affect the general mood and sound of the four different sections?

3. Find good examples of assonance, alliteration, onomatopoeic words, many-syllabled words, effective repetition of words and phrases.

4. Vocabulary: crystalline (8), runic (10), tintinnabulation (11), euphony (26), expostulation (45), palpitating (55), monody (72), ghouls (88), paean (92).

*The Raven*

5. What atmosphere and mood are established at the very beginning of the poem?

6. From the few effective details given, picture to yourself the kind of

room in which this story is set. Contrast this with the bare cottage at Fordham where Poe's own wife died two years later.

7. What in the Raven's behavior makes the poem unusually gruesome and depressing? Of what in life is the Raven a symbol?

8. Find striking examples throughout of Poe's devices: internal rhyme, alliteration, and repetition.

9. Vocabulary: surcease (10), fantastic (14), obeisance (39), mien (40), decorum (44), relevancy (50), ominous, (70), censer (79), seraphim (80), pallid (104).

### *Ulalume*

10. How do the time of the year, the time of the night, and the surroundings of nature all contribute to the mood of the poem? How does the moonlight betray the false hope that the poet had placed in it? What warning had he that the place was not a good one to be in?

11. What mood is suggested by the very sound of the name *Ulalume*? Look up the word *ululate* in the dictionary to find its present meaning and derivation. Does this throw any added light on Poe's choice of the name?

12. Select lines or passages in which the sound particularly appeals to you. For melodious flow and sound effects how do you think it compares with "The Bells," "The Raven," and "Annabel Lee"?

13. Vocabulary: sere (2), immemorial (5), dank tarn (8), volcanic (13), scoriac (14), ultimate (17), boreal (19), senescent (30), liquescent (33), nebulous (34), luminous (50).

### *Annabel Lee*

14. Compare this with the other two poems on the death of a beautiful woman — "The Raven" and "Ulalume" — as to emotional appeal, simplicity of style, and use of sound effects. Which of the three do you prefer? Why?

15. This poem was printed more than two years after the death of Poe's wife, and most critics think it refers to her. It was also claimed, however, by Elmira Shelton, a sweetheart of Poe's youth, whose family had broken up their early love affair. Poe was engaged to her again just before he died. What lines in the poem would have different interpretations according to each of these two possibilities?

### *El Dorado*

16. If this little tale is applied to life, what might *El Dorado* stand for?

17. There are three possible interpretations of this poem: (a) You can never reach *El Dorado*, for there is no such place; (b) whether you find it or not, live courageously; (c) the only way you can find it is by living courageously. The first is cynical; the second, brave; the third, inspirational. Which do you prefer?

*For Ambitious Students*

18. Poe's poems lend themselves particularly well to choral reading by the class or part of the class. If you wish to try this, here are a few simple directions: Divide your voices according to high, medium, and low voices, somewhat as in a singing choir. Vary the effects of the reading by having certain passages read by a single voice or a single range of voices in contrast to passages read by the entire group. "The Bells" is especially good to begin with as the differences are so obvious, beginning with the high voices and dropping to the low voices. Vary the volume as well as the pitch. Some passages may be read lightly; others, with the emphasis of the entire chorus. Have a leader direct the reading, and see what interesting voice music you can produce.

## WALT WHITMAN (1819-1892)

Lowell and Whitman were born in the same year and died within a year of each other. There the parallel ends, for no two men could present a more complete contrast in the backgrounds and the trends of their lives than these two. Lowell was born into the established elegance of an old Cambridge family; Whitman came from humble farming and seafaring folk on Long Island. Lowell was nurtured in college halls and libraries; Whitman roamed the streets of New York and rubbed elbows with human nature in all its varied forms. Lowell wrote a fine scholarly essay on "Democracy"; Whitman gave an unusual example of genuine democratic living. Lowell was honored by an ambassadorship to England; Whitman lost a minor government position because an official considered his poems immoral. Lowell's writings show a vein of rich humor; Whitman regarded life vigorously and vitally, but always seriously.

There are three periods in Whitman's life which you must understand before you can wholly realize his poetic message. His first forty years were spent largely in experimenting with life. During these years he was variously a printer, schoolteacher, newspaper editor, carpenter, wanderer, and perhaps most significant of all — loafer. "I loaf, and invite my soul," he says in one of his poems. It was not mere idleness, but that constructive, glorified loafing of which poets are made. A leisurely journey by train, stage, and river steamship took him to New Orleans and back by way of Niagara. He voluntarily gave up the opportunity to make a good income at his father's trade of housebuilding. He printed the first edition of his own book of poems, *Leaves of Grass*, which nobody would buy. In the eyes of a practical man of the world he would have appeared to be a complete failure.

The second period of his life centered around the War between the

States. When his younger brother was wounded, he went to Washington as a volunteer nurse, and ministered with the greatest affection and tenderness to hundreds of soldiers in the army hospital until he became infected with blood poisoning from dressing a wound. A long illness followed; but his splendid physique brought him back to health, and in 1865 he is thus described by one of his friends: "A man of striking masculine beauty—a poet—powerful and venerable in appearance; large, calm, superbly formed; oftenest clad in the careless, rough, and always picturesque costume of the common people; resembling and generally taken by strangers for some great mechanic or stevedore, or seaman, or grand laborer of one kind or another." It was at this time that he lost his first government position, as previously stated, but his friends arranged that another one should be quietly substituted.

The third period of his life was spent rather sedately, first at Washington until a paralytic stroke forced him to retire, and then at Camden, New Jersey, just across the river from Philadelphia, where the small but sufficient income from his books enabled him to buy a modest home. Here one can picture "The Good Gray Poet" as represented in Alexander's famous painting, touched with a spiritual grandeur in his sunset days. He designed his own mausoleum at Camden. Fittingly enough, it is a massive, rough-hewn gray stone grotto, half hidden in the thick ferns and shrubs of the hillside.

You cannot read Whitman with indifference. You will be either powerfully drawn or violently repelled by his utterances. Some of you will not even grant him the title of poet; some will find an impelling rhythm in his uneven lines. You will have your ideas of poetry challenged; you will be moved to argument; but you cannot go to sleep over Whitman. It is well to know before reading him just what his poetic principles are. He intentionally throws out "the entire stock in trade of rhyme-talking heroes and heroines and all the lovesick plots of customary poetry, and constructs his verse in a loose and free meter of his own." The rhythm is not like the regular beat of waves on the shore, but rather like the impetuous gusts of wind in March. As a later poet, Edgar Lee Masters, said, "Whitman roared in the pines." Ears accustomed to wave-beat rhythm need time to reattune themselves. When *Leaves of Grass* first appeared, it was read only to be reviled. Not only the lack of tunefulness but the supposedly unpoetic subject matter caused Whittier to throw the book in the fire. The other poets seemed to feel similar disgust except Emerson, who, recognizing a true exemplar of his "Self-Reliance," wrote: "I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. . . . I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. . . . I find the courage of treatment which so delights us, and which large perception only can inspire. I greet you at the beginning of a great career." It took many years for the "great career" to be recognized, but Whitman is now securely placed among such original and distinctly American personalities as Emerson, Mark Twain, and Lincoln.

# I HEAR AMERICA SINGING

This poem is often cited as one of the best to voice in condensed form the spirit of America. It suggests Whitman's varied and democratic contacts with life.

I hear America singing, the varied carols I hear,  
Those of mechanics, each one singing his as it should be blithe and  
strong,  
The carpenter singing his as he measures his plank or beam,  
The mason singing his as he makes ready for work, or leaves off work,  
The boatman singing what belongs to him in his boat, the deck hand  
singing on the steamboat deck, 5  
The shoemaker singing as he sits on his bench, the hatter singing as  
he stands,  
The woodcutter's song, the plowboy's on his way in the morning, or  
at noon intermission or at sundown,  
The delicious singing of the mother, or of the young wife at work, or of  
the girl sewing or washing,  
Each singing what belongs to him or her and to none else,  
The day what belongs to the day — at night the party of young fel-  
lows, robust, friendly, 10  
Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs.

# MANNAHATTA

Whitman loved the old Indian names. His native Long Island he preferred to call Paumanok, and his exuberant affection for his city, New York, needed Mannahatta to express it. The name is, of course, perpetuated in Manhattan Island, which forms the core of the city today. In *Sands at Seventy* Whitman printed a three-line poem with the same title.

I was asking for something specific and perfect for my city,  
Whereupon lo! upsprang the aboriginal name.

Now I see what there is in a name, a word, liquid, sane, unruly, musical, self-sufficient,  
I see that the word of my city is that word from of old,  
Because I see that word nested in nests of water bays, superb,                 5  
Rich, hemmed thick all around with sailships and steamships, an island sixteen miles long, solid-founded,

Numberless crowded streets, high growths of iron, slender, strong,  
 light, splendidly uprising toward clear skies,  
 Tides swift and ample, well loved by me, toward sundown,  
 The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger adjoining islands,  
 the heights, the villas,  
 The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the lighters, the ferry-  
 boats, the black sea-steamers well modeled, 10  
 The downtown streets, the jobbers' houses of business, the houses of  
 business of the ship merchants and money brokers, the river  
 streets,  
 Immigrants arriving, fifteen or twenty thousand in a week,  
 The carts hauling goods, the manly race of drivers of horses, the  
 brown-faced sailors,  
 The summer air, the bright sun shining, and the sailing clouds aloft,  
 The winter snows, the sleigh bells, the broken ice in the river, passing  
 along up or down with the flood tide or ebb tide, 15  
 The mechanics of the city, the masters, well formed, beautiful-faced,  
 looking you straight in the eyes,  
 Trottoirs thronged, vehicles, Broadway, the women, the shops and  
 shows,  
 A million people — manners free and superb — open voices — hospi-  
 tality — the most courageous and friendly young men,  
 City of hurried and sparkling waters! city of spires and masts!  
 City nested in bays! my city! 20

17. trottoirs: French for sidewalks.

### SONG OF MYSELF

This very long poem, of which only part is here given, forms the core of *Leaves of Grass*. After many revisions in different editions it now stands as Whitman's declaration of independence of man as an individual, the product of all that has preceded him, the epitome of everything in the world. It is not easy reading, but will amply repay thoughtful rereading.

#### 1

I celebrate myself, and sing myself,  
 And what I assume you shall assume,  
 For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

I loaf and invite my soul,  
 I lean and loaf at my ease observing a spear of summer grass. 5

My tongue, every atom of my blood, formed from this soil, this air,  
Born here of parents born here from parents the same, and their par-  
ents the same,

I, now thirty-seven years old in perfect health, begin,  
Hoping to cease not till death.

Creeds and schools in abeyance, 10  
Retiring back awhile sufficed at what they are, but never forgotten,  
I harbor for good or bad, I permit to speak at every hazard,  
Nature without check with original energy. . . .

## VI

A child said, *What is the grass?* fetching it to me with full hands;  
How could I answer the child? I do not know what it is any more  
than he. 15

I guess it must be the flag of my disposition, out of hopeful green  
stuff woven.

Or I guess it is the handkerchief of the Lord,  
A scented gift and remembrancer designedly dropt,  
Bearing the owner's name someway in the corners, that we may see  
and remark, and say *Whose?*

Or I guess the grass is itself a child, the produced babe of the vegeta-  
tion. 20

Or I guess it is a uniform hieroglyphic,  
And it means, Sprouting alike in broad zones and narrow zones,  
Growing among black folks as among white,  
Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Congressman, Cuff, I give them the same, I re-  
ceive them the same.

And now it seems to me the beautiful uncut hair of graves. 25

Tenderly will I use you, curling grass,  
It may be you transpire from the breasts of young men,  
It may be if I had known them I would have loved them,

24. *Kanuck, Tuckahoe, Cuff*: colloquial terms for Canadian, Virginian, Negro, respectively.



It may be you are from old people, or from offspring taken soon out of  
their mothers' laps,  
And here you are the mothers' laps. 30

This grass is very dark to be from the white heads of old mothers,  
Darker than the colorless beards of old men,  
Dark to come from under the faint red roofs of mouths.

O I perceive after all so many uttering tongues,  
And I perceive they do not come from the roofs of mouths for  
nothing. 35

I wish I could translate the hints about the dead young men and  
women,  
And the hints about old men and mothers, and the offspring taken  
soon out of their laps.

What do you think has become of the young and old men?  
And what do you think has become of the women and children?

They are alive and well somewhere, 40  
The smallest sprout shows there is really no death,  
And if ever there was it led forward life, and does not wait at the end  
to arrest it,  
And ceased the moment life appeared.

All goes onward and outward, nothing collapses, 44  
And to die is different from what anyone supposed, and luckier. . . .

## I X

The big doors of the country barn stand open and ready,  
The dried grass of the harvesttime loads the slow-drawn wagon,  
The clear light plays on the brown gray and green intertinged,  
The armfuls are packed to the sagging mow.

I am there, I help, I came stretched atop of the load, 50  
I felt its soft jolts, one leg reclined on the other,  
I jump from the crossbeams and seize the clover and timothy,  
And roll head over heels and tangle my hair full of wisps.

## X V

. . . Seasons pursuing each other the plower plows, the mower mows,  
 and the winter grain falls in the ground;  
 Off on the lakes, the pike fisher watches and waits by the hole in the  
 frozen surface, 55  
 The stumps stand thick round the clearing, the squatter strikes deep  
 with his ax.  
 Flatboatmen make fast toward dusk near cottonwood or pecan trees,  
 Coon seekers go through the regions of the Red River or through those  
 drained by the Tennessee, or through those of the Arkansas,  
 Torches shine in the dark that hangs on the Chattahoochee or Al-  
 tamaha,  
 Patriarchs sit at supper with sons and grandsons and great-grandsons  
 around them, 60  
 In walls of adobe, in canvas tents, rest hunters and trappers after their  
 day's sport,  
 The city sleeps and the country sleeps,  
 The living sleep for their time, the dead sleep for their time,  
 The old husband sleeps by his wife and the young husband sleeps by  
 his wife;  
 And these tend inward to me, and I tend outward to them, 65  
 And such as it is to be of these more or less I am,  
 And of these one and all I weave the song of myself.

## X X

. . . In all people I see myself, none more and not one barleycorn less,  
 And the good or bad I say of myself I say of them.  
 I know I am solid and sound, 70  
 To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,  
 All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.

I know I am deathless,  
 I know this orbit of mine cannot be swept by a carpenter's compass,  
 I know I shall not pass like a child's curlicue cut with a burnt stick  
 at night. 75

58. **Red River**: flowing through Texas and Louisiana. There are other Red rivers. The other rivers mentioned in this line are in the states of the same names.  
 59. **Chattahoochee** or **Altamaha**: rivers in Georgia. 61. **adobe**: unburnt brick, dried in the sun, much used in the Southwest.

I know I am august,  
 I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood,  
 I see that the elementary laws never apologize,  
 (I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by, after  
 all.)

I exist as I am, that is enough, 80  
 If no other in the world be aware I sit content,  
 And if each and all be aware I sit content.

One world is aware and by far the largest to me, and that is myself,  
 And whether I come to my own today or in ten thousand or ten million  
 years,  
 I can cheerfully take it now, or with equal cheerfulness I can  
 wait. 85

My foothold is tenoned and mortised in granite,  
 I laugh at what you call dissolution,  
 And I know the amplitude of time.

## XXI

I am the poet of the Body and I am the poet of the Soul,  
 The pleasures of heaven are with me and the pains of hell are with  
 me, 90  
 The first I graft and increase upon myself, the latter I translate into  
 a new tongue.

I am the poet of the woman the same as the man,  
 And I say it is as great to be a woman as to be a man,  
 And I say there is nothing greater than the mother of men.

I chant the chant of dilation or pride, 95  
 We have had ducking and deprecating about enough,  
 I show that size is only development.

Have you outstript the rest? are you the President?  
 It is a trifle, they will more than arrive there every one, and still pass  
 on.

I am he that walks with the tender and growing night, 100  
 I call to the earth and sea half held by the night.

Press close bare-bosomed night — press close magnetic nourishing  
night!

Night of the south winds — night of the large few stars!  
Still nodding night — mad naked summer night.

Smile O voluptuous cool-breathed earth! 105

Earth of the slumbering and liquid trees!

Earth of departed sunset — earth of the mountains misty-topt!

Earth of the vitreous pour of the full moon just tinged with blue!

Earth of shine and dark mottling the tide of the river!

Earth of the limpid gray of clouds brighter and clearer for my  
sake! 110

Far-swooping elbowed earth — rich apple-blossomed earth!

Smile, for your lover comes. . . .

## XXII

. . . Sea of stretched ground swells,

Sea breathing broad and convulsive breaths,

Sea of the brine of life and of unshoveled yet always ready  
graves, 115

Howler and scooper of storms, capricious and dainty sea,

I am integral with you, I too am of one phase and of all phases.

## XXXIII

. . . I understand the large hearts of heroes,

The courage of present times and all times,

How the skipper saw the crowded and rudderless wreck of the steam-  
ship, and Death chasing it up and down the storm, 120

How he knuckled tight and gave not back an inch, and was faithful of  
days and faithful of nights,

And chalked in large letters on a board, *Be of good cheer, we will not  
desert you;*

How he followed with them and tacked with them three days and  
would not give it up,

How he saved the drifting company at last,

How the lank loose-gowned women looked when boated from the side  
of their prepared graves, 125

How the silent old-faced infants and the lifted sick, and the sharp-  
lipped unshaven men;

All this I swallow, it tastes good, I like it well, it becomes mine,  
I am the man, I suffered, I was there.

The disdain and calmness of martyrs,  
The mother of old, condemned for a witch, burnt with dry wood, her  
    children gazing on, 130  
The hounded slave that flags in the race, leans by the fence, blowing,  
    covered with sweat,  
The twinges that sting like needles his legs and neck, the murderous  
    buckshot and the bullets,  
All these I feel or am. . . .

## X L I V

. . . All forces have been steadily employed to complete and delight  
    me,  
Now on this spot I stand with my robust soul. . . . 135

## L I I

The spotted hawk swoops by and accuses me, he complains of my gab  
    and my loitering.

I too am not a bit tamed, I too am untranslatable,  
I sound my barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.

The last scud of day holds back for me,  
It flings my likeness after the rest and true as any on the shadowed  
    wilds, 140  
It coaxes me to the vapor and the dusk.

I depart as air, I shake my white locks at the runaway sun,  
I effuse my flesh in eddies, and drift it in lacy jags.

I bequeath myself to the dirt to grow from the grass I love,  
If you want me again look for me under your boot soles. 145

You will hardly know who I am or what I mean,  
But I shall be good health to you nevertheless,  
And filter and fiber your blood.

Failing to fetch me at first keep encouraged,  
Missing me one place search another, 150  
I stop somewhere waiting for you.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How does each of the three preceding poems show Whitman's democratic interest in all types of people? Where does he describe them objectively and where identify himself with their lives more fully?

2. Does his picture of American life in the first poem give a cross section of all types of society, or would you add any types of singing to give a more complete picture?

3. Compare his picture of New York with the cities in which you have lived or traveled. Does he make you feel the spirit of city life in contrast to that of the small town or country? How does his "cataloguing" method add to the general effect? Try writing a similar picture of your own city or town.

4. In "Song of Myself" point out lines or passages in which Whitman regards himself as part of nature, as part of the history of mankind, as part of the present experience of man, as an independent being. What in this poem do you think would have pleased Emerson? displeased the other New England poets? Does this poem bring you a new understanding or appreciation of human values? If so, how?

## BEAT! BEAT! DRUMS!

The terrific upheaval that war brings into civilian life has never been more vividly pictured than in this poem. Here the irregularity of the meter serves to emphasize the general chaos, with the throb of the drums running throughout.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!  
Through the windows — through doors — burst like a ruthless force,  
Into the solemn church, and scatter the congregation,  
Into the school where the scholar is studying;  
Leave not the bridegroom quiet — no happiness must he have now  
with his bride, 5  
Nor the peaceful farmer any peace, plowing his field or gathering his  
grain,  
So fierce you whirl and pound, you drums — so shrill you bugles blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow!  
 Over the traffic of cities — over the rumble of wheels in the streets;  
 Are beds prepared for sleepers at night in the houses? no sleepers must  
     sleep in those beds, 10  
 No bargainners' bargains by day — no brokers or speculators — would  
     they continue?  
 Would the talkers be talking? would the singer attempt to sing?  
 Would the lawyer rise in the court to state his case before the judge?  
 Then rattle quicker, heavier drums — you bugles wilder blow.

Beat! beat! drums! — blow! bugles! blow! 15  
 Make no parley — stop for no expostulation,  
 Mind not the timid — mind not the weeper or prayer,  
 Mind not the old man beseeching the young man,  
 Let not the child's voice be heard, nor the mother's entreaties,  
 Make even the trestles to shake the dead where they lie awaiting the  
     hearses, 20  
 So strong you thump O terrible drums — so loud you bugles blow.

## THE CAROL OF DEATH

*from* WHEN LILACS LAST IN THE DOORYARD BLOOMED

It is natural that a man of Whitman's elemental vigor should have been greatly attracted by the personality of Abraham Lincoln. Of all the poets who have paid tribute to him none has sounded so feelingly the note of personal grief at his death as Whitman. When the news of the assassination came to the poet, he was at home with his mother. He tells us, "Not a mouthful was eaten all day by either of us. We each drank half a cup of coffee; that was all. Little was said. We got every newspaper, morning and evening, and the frequent extras of that period and passed them silently to each other." You have doubtless known for many years that poem by Whitman so universally loved, "O Captain, My Captain!" A full and complete expression of his grief was given in the long poem "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed." In this he pictures himself as finding consolation in the carol of a "gray-brown bird" among "the ghostly pines." "And the voice of my spirit tallied the song of the bird."

Come lovely and soothing death,  
 Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,  
 In the day, in the night, to all, to each,  
 Sooner or later delicate death.

Praised be the fathomless universe, 5  
For life and joy, and for objects and knowledge curious,  
And for love, sweet love — but praise! praise! praise!  
For the sure-enwinding arms of cool-enfolding death.

Dark mother always gliding near with soft feet,  
Have none chanted for thee a chant of fullest welcome? 10  
Then I chant it for thee, I glorify thee above all,  
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come unfal-  
teringly.

Approach strong deliveress,  
When it is so, when thou hast taken them, I joyously sing the dead,  
Lost in the loving floating ocean of thee, 15  
Laved in the flood of thy bliss O death.

From me to thee glad serenades,  
Dances for thee I propose saluting thee, adornments and feastings for  
thee,  
And the sights of the open landscape and the high-spread sky are  
fitting,  
And life and the fields, and the huge and thoughtful night. 20

The night in silence under many a star,  
The ocean shore and the husky whispering wave whose voice I know,  
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veiled death,  
And the body gratefully nestling close to thee.

Over the treetops I float thee a song, 25  
Over the rising and sinking waves, over the myriad fields and the  
prairies wide,  
Over the dense-packed cities all and the teeming wharves and ways,  
I float this carol with joy, with joy to thee O death.

### GIVE ME THE SPLENDID SILENT SUN

Here we have the conflict in the poet's mind between his longing for the peace of nature and his love of pulsing life in the city even though it be during the horrors of wartime. Which conquers? The repetitions and exclamations throughout are highly typical of Whitman's mode of expression.



Give me the splendid silent sun with all his beams full-dazzling,  
 Give me juicy autumnal fruit ripe and red from the orchard,  
 Give me a field where the unmowed grass grows,  
 Give me an arbor, give me the trellised grape,  
 Give me fresh corn and wheat, give me serene-moving animals teach-  
     ing content, 5  
 Give me nights perfectly quiet as on high plateaus west of the Missis-  
     sippi, and I looking up at the stars,  
 Give me odorous at sunrise a garden of beautiful flowers where I can  
     walk undisturbed,  
 Give me for marriage a sweet-breathed woman of whom I should never  
     tire,  
 Give me a perfect child, give me away aside from the noise of the world  
     a rural domestic life,  
 Give me to warble spontaneous songs recluse by myself, for my own  
     ears only, 10  
 Give me solitude, give me Nature, give me again O Nature your  
     primal sanities!

These demanding to have them (tired with ceaseless excitement, and  
     racked by the war strife),  
 These to procure incessantly asking, rising in cries from my heart,  
 While yet incessantly asking still I adhere to my city,  
 Day upon day and year upon year O city, walking your streets, 15  
 Where you hold me enchained a certain time refusing to give me up,  
 Yet giving to make me glutted, enriched of soul, you give me forever  
     faces;  
 (O I see what I sought to escape, confronting, reversing my cries,  
 I see my own soul trampling down what it asked for).

## II

Keep your splendid silent sun, 20  
 Keep your woods O Nature, and the quiet places by the woods,  
 Keep your fields of clover and timothy, and your cornfields and or-  
     chards,  
 Keep the blossoming buckwheat fields where the Ninth-month bees  
     hum;

23. **Ninth-month:** September (the Quaker name).

Give me faces and streets — give me these phantoms incessant and  
 endless along the trottoirs!  
 Give me interminable eyes — give me women — give me comrades  
 and lovers by the thousand! 25  
 Let me see new ones every day — let me hold new ones by the hand  
 every day!  
 Give me such shows — give me the streets of Manhattan!  
 Give me Broadway, with the soldiers marching — give me the sound  
 of the trumpets and drums!  
 (The soldiers in companies or regiments — some starting away,  
 flushed and reckless,  
 Some, their time up, returning with thinned ranks, young, yet very  
 old, worn, marching, noticing nothing); 30  
 Give me the shores and wharves heavy-fringed with black ships!  
 O such for me! O an intense life, full to repletion and varied!  
 The life of the theater, barroom, huge hotel, for me!  
 The saloon of the steamer! the crowded excursion for me! the torch-  
 light procession!  
 The dense brigade bound for the war, with high piled military wagons  
 following; 35  
 People, endless, streaming, with strong voices, passions, pageants,  
 Manhattan streets with their powerful throbs, with beating drums as  
 now,  
 The endless and noisy chorus, the rustle and clang of muskets, (even  
 the sight of the wounded,)  
 Manhattan crowds, with their turbulent musical chorus!  
 Manhattan faces and eyes forever for me. 40

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. The three preceding poems are based on experiences connected with the War between the States. In "Beat! Beat! Drums!" what effects of war upon civilian life are especially emphasized? Which of the effects mentioned seem to you the most devastating? Could this poem be used as an argument against war in general? In what way is the irregular meter appropriate to the subject?

2. Is the tone of "The Carol of Death" prevailingly mournful or consoling? How does this picture of death compare with those given by Bryant in "Thanatopsis" and Lanier in "The Stirrup Cup"? with other poems on death you have read? Would you like to read this poem after a death had occurred in your family? Why or why not? Reread Whitman's "O Captain, My Captain!" — which you doubtless know. What marked

difference do you find in the whole treatment of the death of Lincoln in these two poems?

3. In what way does "Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun" reflect Whitman's war experience? What definite change in mood is found in the middle of the poem? In what way is the second mood linked with the first three poems by Whitman here included? Have you experienced both these moods yourself? Which is your prevailing mood?

### A NOISELESS PATIENT SPIDER

This poem represents the deeper spiritual quality of Whitman's later poetry. It suggests the longings, the gropings, of the soul for something beyond itself. As you read the poem, keep in mind that this is the poet of "Song of Myself," where he is seeking solidarity with mankind.

A noiseless patient spider,  
I marked where on a little promontory it stood isolated,  
Marked how to explore the vacant vast surrounding,  
It launched forth filament, filament, filament, out of itself,  
Ever unreeling them, ever tirelessly speeding them. 5

And you O my soul where you stand,  
Surrounded, detached, in measureless oceans of space,  
Ceaselessly musing, venturing, throwing, seeking the spheres to connect them,  
Till the bridge you will need be formed, till the ductile anchor hold,  
Till the gossamer thread you fling catch somewhere, O my soul. 10

### WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

Whitman's intense feeling for nature is caught in this poem and in "Miracles," which follows. The quiet solemnity of the first is in contrast with the exuberance of the second.

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,  
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,  
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,

When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much ap-  
 plause in the lecture room,  
 How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick, 5  
 Till rising and *gliding* out I wandered off by myself,  
 In the mystical moist night air, and from time to time,  
 Looked up in perfect silence at the stars.

## MIRACLES

Why, who makes much of a miracle?  
 As to me I know of nothing else but miracles,  
 Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,  
 Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,  
 Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the  
 water, 5  
 Or stand under trees in the woods,  
 Or talk by day with anyone I love, or sleep in the bed at night with  
 anyone I love,  
 Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,  
 Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,  
 Or watch honeybees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon, 10  
 Or animals feeding in the fields,  
 Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,  
 Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet and  
 bright,  
 Or the exquisite delicate curve of the new moon in spring;  
 These with the rest, one and all, are to me miracles, 15  
 The whole referring, yet each distinct and in its place.

To me every hour of the night and dark is a miracle,  
 Every cubic inch of space is a miracle,  
 Every square yard of the surface of the earth is spread with the same,  
 Every foot of the interior swarms with the same. 20

To me the sea is a continual miracle,  
 The fishes that swim — the rocks — the motion of the waves — the  
 ships with men in them,  
 What stranger miracles are there?

## DAREST THOU NOW O SOUL

Darest thou now O soul,  
Walk out with me toward the unknown region,  
Where neither ground is for the feet nor any path to follow?

No map there, nor guide,  
Nor voice sounding, nor touch of human hand, 5  
Nor face with blooming flesh, nor lips, nor eyes, are in that land.

I know it not O soul,  
Nor dost thou, all is a blank before us,  
All waits undreamed of in that region, that inaccessible land.

Till when the ties loosen, 10  
All but the ties eternal, Time and Space,  
Nor darkness, gravitation, sense, nor any bounds bounding us.

Then we burst forth, we float,  
In Time and Space O soul, prepared for them,  
Equal, equipt at last (O joy! O fruit of all!) them to fulfill O soul. 15

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Which of the poems of this last group show that Whitman has become more concerned with the spirit and less with the material world than in most of his earlier poems? Which again strike the note of profound interest in everything about him? Where do you find the note of courage? of simplicity? of reverence for nature? of wonder about eternity?

2. Considering all that you have read of Whitman, list the main themes which you have found him treating, and the various peculiarities of his poetic style. What is your own reaction to his poetry? What do you now think of the suitability of Masters's phrase, "Whitman roared in the pines"?

3. If there is disagreement in a class as to whether Whitman deserved the name of "poet," an informal debate on the subject will bring out varying points of view and open up the whole subject of "What is poetry?"

4. Where in these poems can you find evidence of a loose sort of pattern based on parallels and repetition? Can you find similar patterns in the Psalms?

## EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

A few years ago an American anthologist called Emily Dickinson's poetry "perhaps the finest by a woman in the English language." An English critic in commenting on this remark said, "I quarrel only with his 'perhaps.'" The strange thing about Emily Dickinson is that during her lifetime no one outside of her small circle of friends had ever heard of her. None of her poems saw publication until after her death in 1886. Gradually, as slender volumes of her verse began to come out, her name acquired reputation, culminating with the publication of her supposedly complete poems and her *Life and Letters* in 1924. Today she is recognized as a distinct genius.

It has been said that her whole life could be told in three lines:

Born in Amherst  
Lived in Amherst  
Died in Amherst

It is true that outwardly her life was restricted by this little Massachusetts town, but the adventures of her mind and spirit knew no narrow bounds. To read the life written by her niece, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, is to realize how richly imaginative a life may be that bears no mark of outward adventure. Though her poems are all very short and rather similar in verse form, they have remarkable power to startle the mind and challenge the imagination. Once catch the fascination of them and you must read on to find out what original thing she will say next. In view of her retired life, an appropriate poem for an introduction is "I'm Nobody."

## I'M NOBODY

I'm nobody! Who are you?  
Are you nobody, too?  
Then there's a pair of us — don't tell!  
They'd banish us, you know.

How dreary to be somebody!  
How public like a frog  
To tell your name the livelong day  
To an admiring bog!

## A WORD

A word is dead  
 When it is said,  
     Some say.  
 I say it just  
 Begins to live  
     That day.

## TO MAKE A PRAIRIE

To make a prairie it takes a clover  
 And one bee, —  
 One clover, and a bee,  
 And reverie.  
 The reverie alone will do  
 If bees are few.

## AN ALTERED LOOK ABOUT THE HILLS

An altered look about the hills;  
 A Tyrian light the village fills;  
 A wider sunrise in the dawn;  
 A deeper twilight on the lawn;  
 A print of a vermilion foot; 5  
 A purple finger on the slope;  
 A flippant fly upon the pane;  
 A spider at his trade again;  
 An added strut in chanticleer;  
 A flower expected everywhere; 10  
 An ax shrill singing in the woods;  
 Fern odors on untraveled roads, —  
 All this and more I cannot tell,  
 A furtive look you know as well,  
 And Nicodemus' mystery 15  
 Receives it annual reply.

2. **Tyrian**: Ancient Tyre was famous for its manufacture of purple dye. 15. **Nicodemus' mystery**: John 3 : 1-12. Nicodemus' question was "How can a man be born again?" What is "the annual reply"?

## HOW HAPPY IS THE LITTLE STONE

How happy is the little stone  
That rambles in the road alone,  
And doesn't care about careers,  
And exigencies never fears;  
Whose coat of elemental brown 5  
A passing universe put on;  
And independent as the sun,  
Associates or glows alone,  
Fulfilling absolute decree  
In casual simplicity. 10

## SOME KEEP THE SABBATH

Some keep the Sabbath going to church;  
I keep it staying at home,  
With a bobolink for a chorister,  
And an orchard for a dome.  
  
Some keep the Sabbath in surplice; 5  
I just wear my wings,  
And instead of tolling the bell for church,  
Our little sexton sings.  
  
God preaches, — a noted clergyman, —  
And the sermon is never long; 10  
So instead of getting to heaven at last,  
I'm going all along!

## I NEVER SAW A MOOR

I never saw a moor,  
I never saw the sea;  
Yet know I how the heather looks,  
And what a wave must be.  
  
I never spoke with God,  
Nor visited in heaven;  
Yet certain am I of the spot  
As if the chart were given.



## THE SOUL SELECTS HER OWN SOCIETY

An experience of Emily Dickinson's girlhood colored her whole life and was largely responsible for her almost ascetic seclusion in her own home. While on a visit to Philadelphia — so we are told by her niece — she fell in love with a young man and he with her. The tragedy was that he was already married. Emily's decision was that they must never see each other again, and he took his wife and child across the continent. Except to her devoted sister-in-law she never referred directly to this painful experience, but many of her poems show the emotional scar which she covered up so unostentatiously with her charm and wit.

The soul selects her own society,  
Then shuts the door;  
On her divine majority  
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariot's pausing                    5  
At her low gate;  
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling  
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation  
Choose one; 10  
Then close the valves of her attention  
Like stone.

# MY LIFE CLOSED TWICE

My life closed twice before its close;  
It yet remains to see  
If Immortality unveil  
A third event to me,

So huge, so hopeless to conceive,  
As these that twice befell.  
Parting is all we know of heaven,  
And all we need of hell.

## WE NEVER KNOW HOW HIGH

We never know how high we are  
Till we are called to rise;  
And then, if we are true to plan,  
Our statures touch the skies.

The heroism we recite  
Would be a daily thing,  
Did not ourselves the cubits warp  
For fear to be a king.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. For each little poem interpret the meaning in a sentence or two. Do you find them hard or easy to understand? Are there any upon the meaning of which the members of the class disagree?

2. How much can you gather from these poems of Emily Dickinson's attitude toward society? religion? nature? By reading further biographical details try to decide what she meant by "My life closed twice before its close."

3. Select some of the phrases she uses which seem especially fresh and original. Study the last lines of each poem. What characteristic do they all seem to have in common?

4. Emily Dickinson never wrote very long poems. Can you see after reading these why she did not?

*For Ambitious Students*

5. Since Emily Dickinson's poems have no titles except their first lines, the best way to do further reading of her work is simply to get a volume of her poems and go on an exploring expedition.

*Southern Poets*

## HENRY TIMROD (1829-1867)

Timrod and two poets whom you will meet later — Hayne and Lanier — are pathetic illustrations of what war does to destroy the gentler and finer arts of life, especially in the invaded territory. All three, by nature sensitive to beauty, rich in imagination, and full of literary promise, came out

of their experiences in the Confederate Army with broken health, returned to poverty-stricken homes, and surrendered their lives before their time to tuberculosis.

Henry Timrod and Paul Hayne were school chums and fellow poets in Charleston, South Carolina, which before the war was the literary center of the South as Boston was of the North. Poverty, the war, and a seemingly unlucky star interfered with everything Timrod attempted — his college career, his struggle to become a professor, his first volume of poems, and his editorial work on a Southern newspaper. His only child died when less than a year old. When the bankrupt newspaper was unable to pay him a dollar of salary for four months, he wrote thus ruefully to Hayne of the sale of his possessions: "We have — let me see — yes, we have eaten two silver pitchers, one or two dozen silver forks, several sofas, innumerable chairs, and a huge bedstead." Two visits to Hayne among the Georgia pines made a bright spot in his life before death overtook him shortly before his thirty-eighth birthday.

The first of the following poems commemorates the spirit of Timrod's native city under blockade during the early part of the war. Timrod was not a soldier but a war correspondent, and his stirring poems voiced the feelings of the Southerners through the long strife. The second poem, written only a few months before his death, combines Southern courtliness and dignity with the pathos of a lost cause.

### CHARLESTON

Calm as that second summer which precedes  
 The first fall of the snow,  
 In the broad sunlight of heroic deeds  
 The city bides the foe.

As yet, behind their ramparts stern and proud, 5  
 Her bolted thunders sleep —  
 Dark Sumter like a battlemented cloud  
 Looms o'er the solemn deep.

No Calpe frowns from lofty cliff or scar  
 To guard the holy strand; 10  
 But Moultrie holds in leash her dogs of war  
 Above the level sand.

7. **Sumter**: a fort on Charleston harbor which had surrendered to the Southern forces April 14, 1861. Lincoln immediately called for volunteers and the war was opened. 9. **Calpe**: the ancient Phœnician name for the rock of Gibraltar. 11. **Moultrie**: another fort held by the Southerners, about two and a half miles along the South Carolina coast.

And down the dunes a thousand guns lie couched  
Unseen beside the flood —  
Like tigers in some Orient jungle crouched, 15  
That wait and watch for blood.

Meanwhile, through streets still echoing with trade,  
Walk grave and thoughtful men  
Whose hands may one day wield the patriot's blade  
As lightly as the pen. 20

And maidens with such eyes as would grow dim  
Over a bleeding hound  
Seem each one to have caught the strength of him  
Whose sword she sadly bound.

Thus girt without and garrisoned at home, 25  
Day patient following day,  
Old Charleston looks from roof and spire and dome  
Across her tranquil bay.

Ships, through a hundred foes, from Saxon lands  
And spicy Indian ports 30  
Bring Saxon steel and iron to her hands  
And summer to her courts.

But still, along yon dim Atlantic line  
The only hostile smoke  
Creeps like a harmless mist above the brine 35  
From some frail, floating oak.

Shall the spring dawn, and she still clad in smiles  
And with an unscathed brow,  
Rest in the strong arms of her palm-crowned isles  
As fair and free as now? 40

We know not: in the temple of the Fates  
God has inscribed her doom;  
And, all untroubled in her faith, she waits  
The triumph or the tomb.

29. **Saxon lands:** England and its possessions. British ships ran the Northern blockade to bring supplies to the besieged city.

## ODE

SUNG AT THE OCCASION OF DECORATING THE GRAVES OF THE CONFED-  
ERATE DEAD, AT MAGNOLIA CEMETERY, CHARLESTON, S. C., 1867

Sleep sweetly in your humble graves,  
Sleep, martyrs of a fallen cause;  
Though yet no marble column craves  
The pilgrim here to pause.

In seeds of laurel in the earth 5  
The blossom of your fame is blown,  
And somewhere, waiting for its birth,  
The shaft is in the stone!

Meanwhile, behalf the tardy years  
Which keep in trust your storied tombs, 10  
Behold! your sisters bring their tears,  
And these memorial blooms.

Small tributes! but your shades will smile  
More proudly on these wreaths today,  
Than when some cannon-molded pile 15  
Shall overlook this bay.

Stoop, angels, hither from the skies!  
There is no holier spot of ground  
Than where defeated valor lies,  
By mourning beauty crowned! 20

3. **marble column**: Today there is a marble and bronze monument in this cemetery in honor of the fallen soldiers. 10. **storied**: suggesting stories of valor  
15. **cannon-molded pile**: Monuments to soldiers are often made from melted cannon.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the situation of Charleston as described in the poem of that name? Point out specific lines that show the spirit of the people.
2. What does the poem say of blockade runners? What effect did the blockade have on the life of the South? What part have blockades played in more recent wars?
3. What similarities and what differences were there in the circumstances that called forth Emerson's "Concord Hymn" and Timrod's "Ode"? Which occasion would be the more moving? Why?

*For Ambitious Students*

4. Report to the class the circumstances of the secession of South Carolina and the fall of Fort Sumter.

5. Compare the "Ode," the most famous memorial poem of the South, with Lowell's "Commemoration Ode," the most famous in the North. Read also a poem in commemoration of both sides, "The Blue and the Gray," by Francis M. Finch.

6. Read the "Ode" of William Collins, the English poet, who in 1746 commemorated the British soldiers killed in the War of the Austrian Succession. The lives and dispositions of Collins and Timrod are somewhat alike.

## PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (1830-1886)

The contrast between the beginning and the end of Hayne's life is conspicuous. Belonging to a distinguished and wealthy Charleston family, he was given every advantage of education and was a leader in the literary coterie of the city, with editorial positions on two prominent Southern magazines and two volumes of poetry to his credit. Then came the war. Hayne was not physically strong enough for active service and thus became an aide on Governor Pickens's staff. Returning to poverty and a devastated home (his magnificent library had been burned), he moved his wife and son to the pines of Augusta, Georgia, where in a crude log cabin he passed the rest of his days struggling for health and earning a slender income through his poems. Hayne writes less of the war and more about nature than Timrod. There is a dignified beauty in his pictures of the forests which reminds one of Bryant.

## THE MOCKINGBIRD

The mockingbird has been the frequent subject of both literature and music. Hayne wrote another longer poem entitled "The Mockingbirds." Lanier also wrote one with the same title in the singular, in which he called the bird "yon trim Shakespeare on the tree." Audubon has given us a vivid prose account of the bird.

A golden pallor of voluptuous light  
 Filled the warm Southern night:  
 The moon, clear-orbed, above the sylvan scene  
 Moved like a stately queen,  
 So rife with conscious beauty all the while,

What could she do but smile  
 At her own perfect loveliness below,  
 Glased in the tranquil flow  
 Of crystal fountains and unruffled streams?  
 Half lost in waking dreams, 10  
 As down the loneliest forest dell I strayed,  
 Lo! from a neighboring glade,  
 Flashed through the drifts of moonshine, swiftly came  
 A fairy shape of flame.  
 It rose in dazzling spirals overhead, 15  
 Whence to wild sweetness wed,  
 Poured marvelous melodies, silvery trill on trill;  
 The very leaves grew still  
 On the charmed trees to hearken; while for me,  
 Heart-trilled to ecstasy, 20  
 I followed — followed the bright shape that flew,  
 Still circling up the blue,  
 Till as a fountain that has reached its height  
 Falls back in sprays of light  
 Slowly dissolved, so that enrapturing lay 25  
 Divinely melts away  
 Through tremulous spaces to a music mist,  
 Soon by the fitful breeze  
     How gently kissed  
 Into remote and tender silences. 30

## ASPECTS OF THE PINES

Tall, somber, grim, against the morning sky  
     They rise, scarce touched by melancholy airs,  
 Which stir the fadeless foliage dreamfully,  
     As if from realms of mystical despairs.

Tall, somber, grim, they stand with dusky gleams 5  
     Brightening to gold within the woodland's core,  
 Beneath the gracious noontide's tranquil beams, —  
     But the weird winds of morning sigh no more.

A stillness, strange, divine, ineffable,  
     Broods round and o'er them in the wind's surcease,      10  
 And on each tinted copse and shimmering dell  
     Rests the mute rapture of deep-hearted peace.

Last, sunset comes — the solemn joy and might  
     Borne from the west when cloudless day declines —  
 Low, flutelike breezes sweep the waves of light,      15  
     And, lifting dark green tresses of the pines,

Till every lock is luminous, gently float,  
     Fraught with hale odors up the heavens afar,  
 To faint when twilight on her virginal throat  
     Wears for a gem the tremulous vesper star.      20

# A LITTLE WHILE I FAIN WOULD LINGER YET

A little while (my life is almost set!)  
     I fain would pause along the downward way,  
     Musing an hour in this sad sunset ray,  
 While, Sweet! our eyes with tender tears are wet:  
 A little hour I fain would linger yet.      5

A little while I fain would linger yet,  
     All for love's sake, for love that cannot tire;  
     Though fervid youth be dead, with youth's desire,  
 And hope has faded to a vain regret,  
 A little while I fain would linger yet.      10

A little while I fain would linger here:  
     Behold! who knows what strange, mysterious bars  
     'Twixt souls that love may rise in other stars?  
 Nor can love deem the face of death is fair;  
 A little while I fain would linger here.      15

A little while I yearn to hold thee fast,  
     Hand locked in hand, and loyal heart to heart;  
     (O pitying Christ! those woeful words, " We part! ")  
 So ere the darkness fall, the light be past,  
 A little while I fain would hold thee fast.      20



A little while, when light and twilight meet, —  
 Behind, our broken years; before, the deep  
 Weird wonder of the last unfathomed sleep, —  
 A little while I still would clasp thee, Sweet,  
 A little while, when night and twilight meet. 25

A little while I fain would linger here;  
 Behold! who knows what soul-dividing bars  
 Earth's faithful loves may part in other stars?  
 Nor can love deem the face of death is fair:  
 A little while I still would linger here. 30

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What suggestions of the color and habits of the mockingbird do you find in Hayne's poem? If you have never heard a mockingbird, what bird that you have heard do you think it would most nearly resemble?

Vocabulary: pallor (1), voluptuous (1), orb'd (3), sylvan (3), rife (5), glade (12), enrapturing lay (25).

2. At what different times of day are the pines described? How does their appearance differ at each time? If you live in a pine country, observe whether the same aspects are evident in your experience. If you have no opportunity to see pines, try to find pictures which will show them.

Vocabulary: ineffable (9), surcease (10), copse (11), luminous (17), virginal (19), vesper (20).

3. Review the nature poets you have met so far in this volume. Which seem the most like Hayne in the type of nature described?

4. To whom is the author speaking in "A Little While I Fain Would Linger Yet"? If you knew nothing about the poet except from this poem, would you take him to be young, middle-aged, or old? What do you think the "soul-dividing bars" of line 27 might be?

### *For Ambitious Students*

5. If you are a bird lover you will enjoy some other poems about birds: John B. Tabb's "To a Wood Robin," William E. Henley's "Birds in April" and "A Thrush Sings," Witter Bynner's "To a Phoebe Bird," Hilda Conkling's "Pigeons Just Awake," Louise Bogan's "The Crows," Celia Thaxter's "The Sandpiper," Harriet Monroe's "The Water Ouzel."

6. If you love the woods, you will want to read some other poems about them, such as: Bryant's "A Forest Hymn" and "Inscription for the Entrance to a Wood," Richard Watson Gilder's "The Woods That Bring

the Sunset Near," Theodosia Garrison's "The Green Inn," Joyce Kilmer's "Trees," Robert Graves's "An English Wood," Grace Hazard Conkling's "Maine Woods in Winter," Margaret Widdemer's "Winter Branches"

### SIDNEY LANIER (1842-1881)

Of the Southern poets who passed through the War between the States, Sidney Lanier is decidedly the greatest. Besides, he has the distinction of being the only one of our important American poets who was also a professional musician. How fitting it is that the two talents should be linked together in one person! One of Lanier's famous lines is "Music is love in search of a word." As a boy in Macon, Georgia, Sidney had played both the violin and the flute, but the latter became his real medium of expression. He carried his flute with him through the war, where he fought on the Confederate side, and even concealed it up his sleeve when he was sent to a Northern prison. Later, when he was a member of the Peabody Symphony Orchestra of Baltimore, he was considered by many the world's greatest flute player. So impressed was he with the close relation between music and poetry that he wrote *The Science of English Verse* to show the correspondence between the measures of poetry and the bars in music. He believed that by a nice selection of sounds and syllables and the proper "tuning" of his words the poet could produce unusual musical effects. Some of his longer poems have been worked out with the careful balancing of parts observed by the composer of a symphony. In his attention to technique Lanier recalls Poe. He has the same partiality to liquid consonants, the same limpid flow of sounds enhanced by alliteration and other tricks of the poet's trade. But, unlike Poe, he has a strong spiritual and religious bent. He is constantly seeking to interpret the meaning of life, and the marshes, the cornfields, or the sunrise, as described in his long poems, are filled with a sense of the presence of God.

### SONG OF THE CHATTAHOOCHEE<sup>1</sup>

This is one of Lanier's most successful attempts at creating music in words and, therefore, perhaps his best-known poem. Even though you may have read it before just as a lovely song, there is an added pleasure in discovering how the poet worked out the pattern of the melody. After you have read it through first to get the idea — the temptations of the river to linger and the final call which it must answer — read the poem again (aloud, of course) and listen to the rippling sound of the lines.

<sup>1</sup> **Chattahoochee** This river is in Georgia, Lanier's native state.

Out of the hills of Habersham,  
 Down the valleys of Hall,  
 I hurry amain to reach the plain,  
 Run the rapid and leap the fall,  
 Split at the rock and together again, 5  
 Accept my bed, or narrow or wide,  
 And flee from folly on every side  
 With a lover's pain to attain the plain  
 Far from the hills of Habersham,  
 Far from the valleys of Hall. 10

All down the hills of Habersham,  
 All through the valleys of Hall,  
 The rushes cried, *Abide, abide*,  
 The willful waterweeds held me thrall,  
 The laving laurel turned my tide, 15  
 The ferns and the fondling grass said *Stay*,  
 The dewberry dipped for to work delay,  
 And the little reeds sighed, *Abide, abide*,  
*Here in the hills of Habersham*,  
*Here in the valleys of Hall.* 20

High o'er the hills of Habersham,  
 Veiling the valleys of Hall,  
 The hickory told me manifold  
 Fair tales of shade, the poplar tall  
 Wrought me her shadowy self to hold, 25  
 The chestnut, the oak, the walnut, the pine,  
 Overleaning, with flickering meaning and sign,  
 Said, *Pass not, so cold, these manifold*  
*Deep shades of the hills of Habersham*,  
*These glades in the valleys of Hall.* 30

And oft in the hills of Habersham,  
 And oft in the valleys of Hall,  
 The white quartz shone, and the smooth brook-stone  
 Did bar me of passage with friendly brawl,  
 And many a luminous jewel lone 35  
 — Crystals clear or a-cloud with mist,  
 Ruby, garnet and amethyst —

Made lures with the lights of streaming stone  
 In the clefts of the hills of Habersham,  
 In the beds of the valleys of Hall. 40

But oh, not the hills of Habersham,  
 And oh, not the valleys of Hall  
 Avail: I am fain for to water the plain.  
 Downward the voices of Duty call —  
 Downward, to toil and be mixed with the main 45  
 The dry fields burn, and the mills are to turn,  
 And a myriad flowers mortally yearn,  
 And the lordly main from beyond the plain  
 Calls o'er the hills of Habersham,  
 Calls through the valleys of Hall. 50

## BARNACLES

*Barnacles* are small creatures which cling to the sides of vessels and in sufficient number may greatly impede the progress of the ship. Here Lanier has made the parallel between the natural object and man's life more explicit than in "Song of the Chattahoochee," but the underlying idea of the forward urge is the same.

My soul is sailing through the sea,  
 But the Past is heavy and hindereth me.  
 The Past hath crusted cumbrous shells  
 That hold the flesh of cold sea mells  
 About my soul. 5  
 The huge waves wash, the high waves roll,  
 Each barnacle clingeth and worketh dole  
 And hindereth me from sailing!

Old Past let go, and drop i' the sea  
 Till fathomless waters cover thee! 10  
 For I am living but thou art dead;  
 Thou drawest back, I strive ahead  
 The Day to find.  
 Thy shells unbind! Night comes behind,  
 I needs must hurry with the wind 15  
 And trim me best for sailing.

## TAMPA ROBINS

The robin laughed in the orange tree:  
 "Ho, windy North, a fig for thee:  
 While breasts are red and wings are bold  
 And green trees wave us globes of gold,  
     Time's scythe shall reap but bliss for me: 5  
     Sunlight, song, and the orange tree.

Burn, golden globes in leafy sky,  
 My orange planets: crimson I  
 Will shine and shoot among the spheres  
 (Blithe meteor that no mortal fears) 10  
     And thrid the heavenly orange tree  
     With orbits bright of minstrelsy.

If that I hate wild winter's spite —  
 The gibbet trees, the world in white,  
 The sky but gray wind over a grave — 15  
 Why should I ache, the season's slave?  
     I'll sing from the top of the orange tree  
     *Gramercy, winter's tyranny.*

I'll south with the sun, and keep my clime;  
 My wing is king of the summertime; 20  
 My breast to the sun his torch shall hold;  
 And I'll call down through the green and gold,  
     *Time, take thy scythe, reap bliss for me,*  
     *Bestir thee under the orange tree.*

## EVENING SONG

Look off, dear Love, across the sallow sands,  
 And mark yon meeting of the sun and sea,  
 How long they kiss in sight of all the lands.  
     Ah! longer, longer, we.

Now in the sea's red vintage melts the sun,  
 As Egypt's pearl dissolved in rosy wine,  
 And Cleopatra night drinks all. 'Tis done,  
     Love, lay thine hand in mine.

Come forth, sweet stars, and comfort heaven's heart;  
 Glimmer, ye waves, round else-unlighted sands. 10  
 O night! divorce our sun and sky apart,  
 Never our lips, our hands.

### A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

This poem gives an unusual presentation of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. It has several musical settings, the most beautiful of which is by George W. Chadwick, often sung by church choirs.

Into the woods my Master went,  
 Clean forspent, forspent.  
 Into the woods my Master came,  
 Forspent with love and shame.  
 But the olives they were not blind to Him, 5  
 The little gray leaves were kind to Him:  
 The thorn tree had a mind to Him  
 When into the woods He came.

Out of the woods my Master went,  
 And He was well content. 10  
 Out of the woods my Master came,  
 Content with death and shame.  
 When Death and Shame would woo Him last,  
 From under the trees they drew Him last:  
 'Twas on a tree they slew Him — last 15  
 When out of the woods He came.

### THE STIRRUP CUP

As a result of Lanier's imprisonment during the war his health was greatly impaired, and the last few years of his life showed a struggle against consumption which reminds one of Robert Louis Stevenson. During this period he was delivering a series of lectures on English literature at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and sometimes he kept his appointment when he was almost too weak to stand on the platform. His wife testifies that when he wrote the end of "Hymns of the Marshes" he was so near death as to be unable to lift his hand to his mouth, though he wrote it four years before he died. "The Stirrup Cup" expresses the high-hearted courage with which he was able to meet death when it came to him at the age of thirty-nine.

Death, thou'rt a cordial old and rare:  
 Look how compounded, with what care!  
 Time got his wrinkles reaping thee  
 Sweet herbs from all antiquity.

David to thy distillage went, 5  
 Keats, and Gotama excellent,  
 Omar Khayyám, and Chaucer bright,  
 And Shakespeare for a king delight.

Then, Time, let not a drop be spilt:  
 Hand me the cup whene'er thou wilt; 10  
 'Tis thy rich stirrup cup to me;  
 I'll drink it down right smilingly.

5. **David:** King David, writer of the Psalms. 6. **Keats:** John Keats, the English poet, who died of consumption at twenty-six. 6. **Gotama:** another name for Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, who lived in India in the sixth century before Christ. 7. **Omar Khayyám:** a Persian poet of the twelfth century; author of the "Rubáiyát." 7. **Chaucer:** Geoffrey Chaucer, the first notable English poet, who lived in the fourteenth century. 11. **stirrup cup:** the last drink taken by a horseman before he starts to ride.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In "Song of the Chattahoochee" observe how neatly the second, third, and fourth stanzas each record a different kind of temptation to linger. Try to name a topic for each stanza. While there is no direct moral expressed, can you work out an implied parallel between the river and man's life?

2. How many examples of alliteration can you find in this poem? What particular consonants are used again and again? Where is refrain used? Do you like the variation of the refrain better than an exact refrain? Compare the sound of this poem with "Ulalume" (page 544). What similar devices are used? What marked differences are there between the two poems?

3. What do you think were some specific "barnacles" in Lanier's life that held him back? What "barnacles" impede the progress of our civilization?

Vocabulary: cumbrous (3), sea mells (4), dole (7), fathomless (10).

4. What is the mood of "Tampa Robins"? Do you think the words of the robins express Lanier's own feeling? Why? What is the force of the phrase "gibbet trees"? What other striking phrases can you find? Do you know other bird poems in which the bird speaks?

5. In "A Ballad of Trees and the Master" when and why was the Master "forspent"? Why was He "content with death and shame" when He came out of the woods? What is meant by "on a tree they slew Him"?

6. What do you think the poets mentioned in "The Stirrup Cup" had to do with Lanier's attitude toward death? Compare his feeling with that of Bryant in "Thanatopsis" (page 467) and of Whitman in "The Carol of Death" (page 562). Would you say that death is a common or uncommon subject among poets?

Vocabulary: cordial (1), distillage (5).

### *For Ambitious Students*

7. Read Tennyson's "The Brook," with which "Song of the Chattahoochee" has often been compared. Which do you prefer in rhythm? in idea?

8. Many other rivers in Georgia have musical names: Savannah, Willacoochee, Altamaha. What geographical names in your own state might have poems built around them? Try writing a short one.

9. John Hay has written a poem called "The Stirrup Cup" (to be found in Jessie Rittenhouse's *Little Book of American Poets*). Contrast the attitude of the two poets. Which do you prefer?

## *Transition Poets*

EDWARD ROWLAND SILL (1841-1887)

Edward Rowland Sill, a Connecticut youth and Yale graduate, went West on account of his health, and taught in the University of California. The combination of Eastern respect for tradition and Western scorn of it caused in him a mental conflict which led to uncertainty and loneliness, expressed in many of his poems. Though the body of his writing is small, "The Fool's Prayer" and "Opportunity" have found a secure place in our literature.

### THE FOOL'S PRAYER

The royal feast was done; the king  
Sought some new sport to banish care,  
And to his jester cried: "Sir Fool,  
Kneel now, and make for us a prayer!



- The jester doffed his cap and bells, 5  
 And stood the mocking court before;  
 They could not see the bitter smile  
 Behind the painted grin he wore.
- He bowed his head, and bent his knee 10  
 Upon the monarch's silken stool;  
 His pleading voice arose: "O Lord,  
 Be merciful to me, a fool!
- "No pity, Lord, could change the heart  
 From red with wrong to white as wool;  
 The rod must heal the sin: but Lord, 15  
 Be merciful to me, a fool!
- "'Tis not by guilt the onward sweep  
 Of truth and right, O Lord, we stay;  
 'Tis by our follies that so long  
 We hold the earth from heaven away. 20
- "These clumsy feet, still in the mire,  
 Go crushing blossoms without end;  
 These hard, well-meaning hands we thrust  
 Among the heartstrings of a friend.
- "The ill-timed truth we might have kept — 25  
 Who knows how sharp it pierced and stung?  
 The word we had not sense to say —  
 Who knows how grandly it had rung!
- "Our faults no tenderness should ask,  
 The chastening stripes must cleanse them all; 30  
 But for our blunders — oh, in shame  
 Before the eyes of heaven we fall.
- "Earth bears no balsam for mistakes;  
 Men crown the knave, and scourge the tool  
 That did his will; but Thou, O Lord, 35  
 Be merciful to me, a fool! "
- The room was hushed; in silence rose  
 The king, and sought his gardens cool,  
 And walked apart, and murmured low,  
 "Be merciful to me, a fool! " 40

## OPPORTUNITY

This I beheld, or dreamed it in a dream: —  
 There spread a cloud of dust along a plain;  
 And underneath the cloud, or in it, raged  
 A furious battle, and men yelled, and swords  
 Shocked upon swords and shields. A prince's banner 5  
 Wavered, then staggered backward, hemmed by foes.  
 A craven hung along the battle's edge,  
 And thought, " Had I a sword of keener steel —  
 That blue blade that the king's son bears, — but this  
 Blunt thing — " He snapt, and flung it from his hand, 10  
 And lowering crept away and left the field.  
 Then came the king's son, wounded, sore bestead,  
 And weaponless, and saw the broken sword,  
 Hilt-buried in the dry and trodden sand,  
 And ran and snatched it, and with battle shout 15  
 Lifted afresh he hewed his enemy down,  
 And saved a great cause that heroic day.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the double meaning of " fool " in " The Fool's Prayer " ? In what way had the king been a fool ? Are most of us fools in this sense ?
2. Do you agree with the idea expressed in the fifth stanza ? Discuss.
3. Explain the application of the little parable in " Opportunity. " Give examples from your experience or reading of people who have had to meet situations with " broken swords " and have come out triumphant.
4. Show how both these poems illustrate the effective use of contrast.

## JOAQUIN MILLER (1841-1913)

His real name was Cincinnatus Heine Miller. He said that he was born on the boundary line between Ohio and Indiana as his parents were trekking westward in a covered wagon. Whether that is strictly true or not does not matter much now; more important is the fact that he became the poet of the great westward movement. Miller wrote a substantial amount of verse, most of it hardly worth noting; but he did write a few poems of decidedly solid merit.

"Columbus" is the best-known tribute in our literature to the great navigator who opened up the New World to Europe. "Westward Ho!" carried out the same idea of the urge for discovery that was shown by the pioneers of our far-flung Western frontier.

## COLUMBUS

Behind him lay the gray Azores,  
 Behind the Gates of Hercules;  
 Before him not the ghost of shores;  
 Before him only shoreless seas.  
 The good mate said: "Now must we pray,  
 For lo! the very stars are gone,  
 Brave Adm'r'l, speak, what shall I say?"  
 "Why, say: 'Sail on! sail on! and on!'"

"My men grow mutinous day by day;  
 My men grow ghastly wan and weak."  
 The stout mate thought of home; a spray  
 Of salt wave washed his swarthy cheek.  
 "What shall I say, brave Adm'r'l, say,  
 If we sight naught but seas at dawn?"  
 "Why, you shall say at break of day:  
 'Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on!'"

They sailed and sailed, as winds might blow,  
 Until at last the blanched mate said:  
 "Why, now not even God would know  
 Should I and all my men fall dead."  
 These very winds forget their way,  
 For God from these dread seas is gone.  
 Now speak, brave Adm'r'l, speak and say —  
 He said: "Sail on! sail on! and on!"

They sailed. They sailed. Then spake the mate:  
 "This mad sea shows his teeth tonight.  
 He curls his lip, he lies in wait,  
 With lifted teeth, as if to bite!

1. Azores: islands in the mid-Atlantic west of Portugal. 2. Gates of Hercules: the Straits of Gibraltar.

Brave Adm'r'l, say but one good word:  
 What shall we do when hope is gone? " 30  
 The words leapt like a leaping sword:  
 " Sail on! sail on! sail on! and on! "

Then, pale and worn, he kept his deck,  
 And peered through darkness. Ah, that night  
 Of all dark nights! And then a speck — 35  
 A light! A light! At last a light!  
 It grew, a starlit flag unfurled!  
 It grew to be Time's burst of dawn.  
 He gained a world; he gave that world  
 Its grandest lesson: " On! sail on! " 40

## WESTWARD HO!

What strength! what strife! what rude unrest!  
 What shocks! what half-shaped armies met!  
 A mighty nation moving west,  
 With all its steely sinews set  
 Against the living forests. Hear 5  
 The shouts, the shots of pioneer,  
 The rended forests, rolling wheels,  
 As if some half-checked army reels,  
 Recoils, redoubles, comes again,  
 Loud sounding like a hurricane. 10

O bearded, stalwart, westmost men,  
 So towerlike, so Gothic built!  
 A kingdom won without the guilt  
 Of studied battle, that hath been  
 Your blood's inheritance. . . . Your heirs 15  
 Know not your tombs: the great plowshares  
 Cleave softly through the mellow loam  
 Where you have made eternal home  
 And set no sign. Your epitaphs  
 Are writ in furrows. Beauty laughs 20  
 While through the green ways wandering  
 Beside her love slow gathering

White, starry-hearted Maytime blooms  
 Above your lowly leveled tombs;  
 And then below the spotted sky 25  
 She stops, she leans, she wonders why  
 The ground is heaved and broken so,  
 And why the grasses darker grow  
 And droop and trail like wounded wing.  
 Yea, Time, the grand old harvester, 30  
 Has gathered you from wood and plain.  
 We call to you again, again;  
 The rush and rumble of the car  
 Comes back in answer. Deep and wide  
 The wheels of progress have passed on; 35  
 The silent pioneer is gone.  
 His ghost is moving down the trees,  
 And now we push the memories  
 Of bluff bold men who dared and died  
 In foremost battle, quite aside. 40

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what way is a repeated refrain especially suitable to the subject matter of "Columbus"? Find other examples of repeated or balanced phrases which add to the rhythmic quality and to the climax of the poem.
2. What similarities in idea do you find between "Columbus" and "Westward Ho!"? What marked differences in the way the idea is treated and the metrical form of the two poems? Which of the two do you prefer?

### *For Ambitious Students*

3. By studying an account of Columbus find other incidents or situations in his life that show his determination.
4. These two poems make a good point of departure for the discussion and listing of: (a) the literature centering around great discoverers and explorers; (b) the literature centering around the pioneers of the western movement. Several students might work together in this project.
5. Find pictures of the ships of Columbus and the covered wagons of the pioneers, and contrast them with the means of transportation today.
6. Try your hand at writing a parody on "Columbus," using some other determined hero or pioneer, changing the wording to suit the circumstances. Remember that a parody does not necessarily have to be funny.

## JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY (1849-1916)

James Whitcomb Riley was undoubtedly the most popular American poet of the end of the nineteenth century. His verse suggests a combination of some elements of Longfellow and Lowell; for like the former he was the poet of the children and of simple sentiment, while like the latter he immortalized the rural dialect of his state. Riley, "the Hoosier poet," was born in Greenfield, Indiana, and always made his home in or near Indianapolis. He was not a farmboy, but the son of a prosperous lawyer who wished his son to follow in his footsteps. Like many of his literary predecessors, the young man found the attempted study distasteful and ran away with a troupe of strolling actors. His services to the troupe were varied by coaching, poster painting, and drumbeating, as well as by acting. Then followed a newspaper career, and in his later life lecture tours and public readings from his poems. It is hard to associate the cheerful Riley with Poe, yet, curiously enough, his youthful joke of publishing a poem "Leonainie" over the initials E. A. P. was accepted seriously by some persons as a genuine discovery.

At the age of thirty-three he began a series of dialect poems in the Indianapolis *Journal* signed by "Benj. F. Johnson, of Boone, the Hoosier poet." Unlike other famous pseudonyms, it did not stick to the poet except for the last part — which seems to have become an invariable apposition to Riley's own name. The child dialect, pronounced rhythms, and homely vividness of such poems as "The Raggedy Man" and "Little Orphant Annie" make them popular with children, who today celebrate his birthday in schools throughout the country.

## WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN

When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock,  
 And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey cock,  
 And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the hens,  
 And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;  
 O, it's then the time a feller is a-feelin' at his best, 5  
 With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful rest,  
 As he leaves the house, bareheaded, and goes out to feed the stock,  
 When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

They's something kindo' hartylike about the atmusfere  
 When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is here — 10  
 Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on the trees,  
 And the mumble of the hummin'birds and buzzin' of the bees;

But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the haze  
 Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airy autumn days  
 Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock — 15  
 When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock.

The husky, rusty russel of the tassels of the corn,  
 And the raspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the morn;  
 The stubble in the furries — kindo' lonesomelike, but still  
 A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they growed to fill; 20  
 The strawstack in the medder, and the reaper in the shed;  
 The hosses in theyr stalls below — the clover overhead! —  
 O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,  
 When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

Then your apples all is gethered, and the ones a feller keeps 25  
 Is poured around the celler floor in red and yeller heaps;  
 And your cider makin's over, and your wimmern folks is through  
 With their mince and apple butter, and theyr souse and sausage, too!  
 I don't know how to tell it — but ef sich a thing could be  
 As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on *me* — 30  
 I'd want to 'commodeate 'em — all the whole indurin' flock —  
 When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the shock!

### MY FIDDLE

My fiddle? — Well, I kindo' keep her handy, don't you know!  
 Though I ain't so much inclined to tromp the strings and switch the  
     bow  
 As I was before the timber of my elbows got so dry,  
 And my fingers was more limberlike and caperish and spry;  
     Yit I can plonk and plunk and plink, 5  
     And tune her up and play,  
 And jest lean back and laugh and wink  
     At ev'ry rainy day!

My playin' 's only middlin' — tunes I picked up when a boy —  
 The kindo'-sorto' fiddlin' that the folks call "cordaroy"; 10  
 "The Old Fat Gal," and "Rye-straw," and "My Sailyor's on the  
     Sea,"

Is the old cowtillions I "saw" when the ch'ice is left to me;  
 And so I plunk and plunk and plink,  
 And rosum up my bow  
 And play the tunes that makes you think 15  
 The devil's in your toe!

I was allus a romancin', do-less boy, to tell the truth,  
 A-fiddlin' and a-dancin', and a-wastin' of my youth,  
 And a-actin' and a-cuttin' up all sorts o' silly pranks  
 That wasn't worth a button of anybody's thanks! 20  
 But they tell me, when I used to plink  
 And plunk and plunk and play,  
 My music seemed to have the kink  
 O' drivin' cares away!

That's how this here old fiddle's won my hart's indurin' love! 25  
 From the strings acrost her middle, to the screechin' keys above —  
 From her "apern," over "bridge," and to the ribbon round her throat,  
 She's a wooin', cooin' pigeon, singin' "Love me" ev'ry note!  
 And so I pat her neck, and plink  
 Her strings with lovin' hands, — 30  
 And, listenin' clos't, I sometimes think  
 She kindo' understands!

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Be sure you can interpret the dialect to get the meaning, especially in words like "hallylooyer," "furries," "medder" in the first poem and "cowtillions" in the second. Have you ever heard anyone speak a dialect similar to this? Do you like dialect poems?
2. How does autumn make the poet feel? Does it affect you the same way? What other poems on autumn do you know?
3. How does the old man feel toward his fiddle? Have you ever had a similar feeling for a musical instrument or other possession? Why has the fiddle been associated with farm life more than other instruments?

### *For Ambitious Students*

4. If you are a "fiddler," learn the tunes mentioned in the second stanza and play them for the class. Show the class the different parts of the fiddle mentioned in the last stanza.



5. Read several of Riley's farm poems and Hamlin Garland's farm stories. What rather different impression of farm life do you get from the two men? Does their own experience with farm life account for this difference?

6. Riley "old favorites" are "The Old Man and Jim," "Knee-deep in June," "My Ruthers," "Wet-Weather Talk," "An Old Sweetheart of Mine," "A Life Lesson," "Out to Old Aunt Mary's," "The Old Swimmin'-Hole."

### EUGENE FIELD (1850-1895)

Though Field and Riley are often bracketed together because they were contemporary newspapermen and poets of childhood, their work shows numerous differences. Riley's dialect poems give us Midwestern domestic life, and are always decidedly local in flavor; Field shows the influence of foreign literature in his translations, his imitations of Horace, and his series of lullabies of all nations. Field was wittier than Riley and more original. He was one of the first newspaper columnists, and most of his poems were written primarily to fill his daily space. His newspaper connections were in St. Louis, the city of his birth, Chicago, and Denver. The following poems of childhood illustrate Field's characteristic pathos and humor.

#### LITTLE BOY BLUE

The little toy dog is covered with dust,  
 But sturdy and stanch he stands;  
 The little toy soldier is red with rust,  
 And his musket molds in his hands.  
 Time was when the little toy dog was new 5  
 And the soldier was passing fair;  
 And that was the time when our Little Boy Blue  
 Kissed them and put them there.

"Now don't you go till I come," he said,  
 "And don't you make any noise!" 10  
 So toddling off to his trundle bed,  
 He dreamt of the pretty toys;  
 And, as he was dreaming, an angel song  
 Awakened our Little Boy Blue, —  
 Oh! the years are many, the years are long, 15  
 But the little toy friends are true!

Ay, faithful to Little Boy Blue they stand,  
 Each in the same old place,  
 Awaiting the touch of a little hand,  
 The smile of a little face;  
 And they wonder, as waiting the long years through,  
 In the dust of that little chair,  
 What has become of our Little Boy Blue  
 Since he kissed them and put them there.

20

## THE LIMITATIONS OF YOUTH

I'd like to be a cowboy an' ride a firey hoss  
 Way out into the big and boundless West;  
 I'd kill the bears an' catamounts an' wolves I come across,  
 An' I'd pluck the bal' head eagle from his nest!  
 With my pistols at my side,  
 I would roam the prarers wide,  
 An' to scalp the savage Injun in his wigwam would I ride —  
 If I darst; but I darsen't!

5

I'd like to go to Afriky an' hunt the lions there,  
 An' the biggest ollyfunts you ever saw!  
 I would track the fierce gorilla to his equatorial lair,  
 An' beard the cannybull that eats folks raw!  
 I'd chase the pizen snakes  
 An' the 'pottimus that makes  
 His nest down at the bottom of unfathomable lakes —  
 If I darst; but I darsen't!

10

15

I would I were a pirut to sail the ocean blue,  
 With a big black flag afflyin' overhead;  
 I would scour the billowy main with my gallant pirut crew  
 An' dye the sea a gouty, gory red!  
 With my cutlass in my hand  
 On the quarter-deck I'd stand  
 And to deeds of heroism I'd incite my pirut band —  
 If I darst; but I darsen't!

20

And, if I darst, I'd lick my pa for the times that he's licked me! 25  
 I'd lick my brother an' my teacher, too!  
 I'd lick the fellers that call round on sister after tea,  
 An' I'd keep on lickin' folks till I got through!  
 You bet! I'd run away  
 From my lessons to my play, 30  
 An' I'd shoo the hens, an' tease the cat, an' kiss the girls all day —  
 If I darst; but I darsen't!

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Though these poems are about children, show why they make their appeal to older people rather than to children of the age described.
2. If possible, have "Little Boy Blue" presented in its musical setting. Find out by reading the life of Field if this poem was based on actual experience in his own family.
3. Discuss how "but I darsen't" limits the actions of people older than the boy in the poem.
4. Read "Casey's Table d'Hôte" and others of Field's Western poems.

#### BLISS CARMAN (1861-1929)

(William) Bliss Carman was an American in the most inclusive sense of the word, for he was born in Canada and retained his Canadian citizenship but lived in the United States for more than forty years. His point of view was distinctly cosmopolitan, partly owing to his education in three countries — Canada, Great Britain, and the United States. From his first volume, *Low Tide on Grand Pré* (1893), to *Wild Garden* (1929) Carman's poetry struck an outdoor note, the natural scenery of the wild Northland of lakes and forests. This consistency of theme is fully demonstrated in the two poems that follow, the first written in youth and the second in old age.

Carman published many volumes; and the ones which established his reputation were three successive *Songs from Vagabondia*, written in collaboration with his friend Richard Hovey in the nineties. Both Carman and Hovey were strongly influenced by the revolt of youth against conventionalities of all kinds then manifest in all countries, especially in France, and both were enthusiastic followers of Whitman except that they did not adopt his ideas about verse forms. The title of the poem "Green Fire" is an Indian expression for the first young verdure in spring, which seems to spread as quickly as fire over the earth.

## A VAGABOND SONG

There is something in the autumn that is native to my blood —  
Touch of manner, hint of mood;  
And my heart is like a rhyme,  
With the yellow and the purple and the crimson keeping time.

The scarlet of the maples can shake me like a cry  
Of bugles going by.  
And my lonely spirit thrills  
To see the frosty asters like a smoke upon the hills.

There is something in October sets the gypsy blood astir;  
We must rise and follow her,  
When from every hill of flame  
She calls and calls each vagabond by name.

## GREEN FIRE

You will never know the glory of the coming of the spring  
Till you look upon its magic in the North,  
When the wilderness is waking in a mist of Magian green  
To the everlasting wonder of new birth.

Here in a starry silence when the Manitou sent forth  
His summons to the Keepers of the Word,  
The pinetops caught his whisper, and from the swampy lands  
The shrilling frogs made answer as they heard.

Now the birches break in yellow against the morning blue,  
The aspens are a wash of palest gold,                    TO  
The tamaracks in young green are soft as drifted smoke  
In the freshness of enchantment never told.

3. **Magian:** pertaining to the Magi, priests of ancient Media and Persia. This does not refer to the Magi who brought gifts to the infant Christ, but rather to the supposition that Magi, or wise men, were sorcerers. The word here has the force of "miraculous." 5. **Manitou:** among the Algonquin Indians one of the powers controlling natural phenomena. 6. **Keepers of the Word:** the Manitou's servants or messengers who carry out his commands.

The open lakes are sparkling, the rivers running white  
With rapids calling all along the trail,  
And Wiseheart and Fondheart, they know 'tis time to go 15  
Where lonely valleys answer to their hail.

Old heart, dear heart, hold the glory dream!  
There's a cabin in a clearing round the bend,  
With pointed firs about it, a river at the door,  
And hermit thrushes singing at day's end. 20

For the Master of the Open, the Spirit of the Wild,  
Our guide in wisdom, beauty and desire,  
Is making the old medicine whose conjure name is Love,  
And all the hills are smoky with Green Fire.

23. **medicine:** in the Indian sense of control over natural forces by magic.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What details in these poems indicate that Carman lived in the North? Are there any details in either poem that do not apply to nature as you have observed it in your part of the country?
2. Point out resemblances in the two poems as to mood, color effects, and figurative use of smoke. Which poem is the better expression of your own feeling about that particular time of year?
3. In "Green Fire" are "Wiseheart" and "Fondheart" names of Indians, or do they stand for something else? What other application of an Indian idea do you find in this poem?
4. Which do you think more common, poems of spring or of autumn? What other examples of seasonal poems can you find in this book? Bring to class other seasonal poems that you can find or, better yet, write one of your own.

#### RICHARD HOVEY (1864-1900)

After reading "The Sea Gypsy" by Richard Hovey in connection with the preceding poems by his friend Bliss Carman, it becomes easy to understand why in their three joint volumes of *Songs from Vagabondia* it was often difficult to determine which of the two had written a particular poem. Of the two, Hovey gave promise of being the greater poet. Be-

sides a number of volumes of poems chiefly lyrical, he wrote five plays on Arthurian subjects, a most ambitious attempt to deal with the story of King Arthur.

Richard Hovey was born in Normal, Illinois. In 1885 he graduated from Dartmouth, and then determined to be a preacher. Before he finished his course at Union Theological Seminary in New York, he gave that idea up and entered journalism. This led to his writing plays, giving lectures, acting, and writing poetry. After spending some time in France in close association with the poet and dramatist Maeterlinck, some of whose work he translated, Hovey returned to this country. Just as he was settling down to a professorship in English at Barnard College, he died, like so many brilliant poets, at an early age — thirty-six.

### THE SEA GYPSY

I am fevered with the sunset,  
I am fretful with the bay,  
For the wander thirst is on me  
And my soul is in Cathay.

There's a schooner in the offing, 5  
With her topsails shot with fire,  
And my heart has gone aboard her  
For the Islands of Desire.

I must forth again tomorrow!  
With the sunset I must be 10  
Hull down on the trail of rapture  
In the wonder of the sea.

### A STEIN SONG

*from SPRING*

Give a rouse, then, in the Maytime  
For a life that knows no fear!  
Turn nighttime into daytime  
With the sunlight of good cheer!  
For it's always fair weather  
When good fellows get together,  
With a stein on the table and a good song ringing clear.

When the wind comes up from Cuba,  
 And the birds are on the wing,  
 And our hearts are patting juba 10  
 To the banjo of the spring,  
 Then it's no wonder whether  
 The boys will get together,  
 With a stein on the table and a cheer for everything.

For we're all frank-and-twenty 15  
 When the spring is in the air;  
 And we've faith and hope aplenty,  
 And we've life and love to spare:  
 And it's birds of a feather  
 When we all get together, 20  
 With a stein on the table and a heart without a care.

For we know the world is glorious,  
 And the goal a golden thing,  
 And that God is not censorious  
 When his children have their fling; 25  
 And life slips its tether  
 When the boys get together,  
 With a stein on the table in the fellowship of spring.

10. juba: a shuffling Negro dance.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What similarities do you see between Carman and Hovey, judging from these four poems? Can you detect a difference in their moods as here illustrated?

2. Compare "The Sea Gypsy" with Masfield's "Sea Fever," "Tewksbury Road," and "A Wanderer's Song"; with Stevenson's "A Vagabond"; and with Kipling's "Gypsy Trail."

3. What does "A Stein Song" have in common with the other Carman-Hovey poems, and with the group mentioned above? This has been set to well-known music and is a favorite with college students. Which of the poems above are also familiar in musical settings? Why do you think this type of poem lends itself particularly well to music? A good class program could be made with the help of a soloist or phonograph records.

SOME FAMOUS POEMS OF THE NINETEENTH  
CENTURY

## BEFORE THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

Cary, Phoebe, "Nearer Home"  
Dana, R. H., "The Little Beach Bird"  
Drake, J. R., "The American Flag"  
English, T. D., "Ben Bolt"  
Foster, S. C., "The Old Folks at Home"; "My Old Kentucky Home"  
Halleck, Fitz-Greene, "Marco Bozzaris"  
Hopkinson, Joseph, "Hail, Columbia"  
Key, F. S., "The Star-Spangled Banner"  
Larcom, Lucy, "Hannah Binding Shoes"  
Morris, G. P., "Woodman, Spare That Tree"  
Payne, J. H., "Home, Sweet Home"  
Shaw, D. T., "Columbia the Gem of the Ocean"  
Simms, W. G., "The Swamp Fox"  
Smith, S. F., "America"  
Woodworth, Samuel, "The Old Oaken Bucket"

## CONNECTED WITH THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

Finch, F. M., "The Blue and the Gray"  
Gilmore, Patrick, "When Johnny Comes Marching Home"  
Howe, J. W., "The Battle Hymn of the Republic"  
Kittredge, Walter, "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground"  
Pike, Albert, "Dixie"  
Randall, J. R., "Maryland, My Maryland"  
Read, T. B., "Sheridan's Ride"  
Root, G. F., "The Battle Cry of Freedom"; "Just before the Battle,  
Mother"; "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp"  
Ticknor, Francis, "Little Giffen"  
Work, H. C., "Marching through Georgia"

## AFTER THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

Hay, John, "Jim Bludso"  
Ingalls, John, "Opportunity"  
Taylor, Bayard, "Bedouin Song"  
Thaxter, Celia, "The Sandpiper"  
Thomas, E. M., "Frost Tonight"



## *Twentieth-Century Poets*

EDWIN MARKHAM (1852-1940)

Edwin Markham, child of pioneer parents, spent his boyhood in Oregon and California. Not satisfied with his life of farming and bronco riding on a cattle ranch, he determined to be a teacher and entered a California normal school, later acting as superintendent of schools for many years. Though he had been writing poetry of varying merit since childhood, he suddenly became famous when he was forty-seven years old with "The Man with the Hoe." Partly because the poem was a splendid challenging thing in itself, partly because at the end of the nineteenth century there was a great wave of interest in common workers, the poem had, and still has, tremendous vogue, being quoted in papers from West to East. The poem was suggested by Millet's notable painting of a French peasant leaning on his hoe. Markham's own words best show the interpretation he gave to the picture: "The Yeoman is the landed and well-to-do farmer; you need shed no tears for him. But here in the Millet picture is the opposite—the Hoeman: the landless, the soul-blighted workman of the world; the dumb creature that has no time to rest, no time to think, no time for the hopes that make us men."

### THE MAN WITH THE HOE

WRITTEN AFTER SEEING MILLET'S WORLD-FAMOUS PAINTING OF A  
BRUTALIZED TOILER IN THE DEEP ABYSS OF LABOR

"God made man in his own image; in the image of God made He him." — *Genesis*.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Bowed by the weight of centuries he leans          |    |
| Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,              |    |
| The emptiness of ages in his face,                 |    |
| And on his back the burden of the world.           |    |
| Who made him dead to rapture and despair,          | 5  |
| A thing that grieves not and that never hopes,     |    |
| Stolid and stunned, a brother to the ox?           |    |
| Who loosened and let down this brutal jaw?         |    |
| Whose was the hand that slanted back this brow?    |    |
| Whose breath blew out the light within this brain? | 10 |

Is this the thing the Lord God made and gave  
 To have dominion over sea and land;  
 To trace the stars and search the heavens for power;  
 To feel the passion of eternity?  
 Is this the dream He dreamed who shaped the suns 15  
 And marked their ways upon the ancient deep?  
 Down all the caverns of hell to their last gulf  
 There is no shape more terrible than this —  
 More tongued with cries against the world's blind greed —  
 More filled with signs and portents for the soul — 20  
 More packed with danger to the universe.

What gulfs between him and the seraphim!  
 Slave of the wheel of labor, what to him  
 Are Plato and the swing of Pleiades?  
 What the long reaches of the peaks of song, 25  
 The rift of dawn, the reddening of the rose?  
 Through this dread shape the suffering ages look;  
 Time's tragedy is in that aching stoop;  
 Through this dread shape humanity betrayed,  
 Plundered, profaned and disinherited, 30  
 Cries protest to the Powers that made the world,  
 A protest that is also prophecy.

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,  
 Is this the handiwork you give to God,  
 This monstrous thing distorted and soul-quenched? 35  
 How will you ever straighten up this shape;  
 Touch it again with immortality;  
 Give back the upward looking and the light;  
 Rebuild in it the music and the dream;  
 Make right the immemorial infamies, 40  
 Perfidious wrongs, immedicable woes?

O masters, lords and rulers in all lands,  
 How will the future reckon with this man?  
 How answer his brute question in that hour  
 When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores? 45

24. **Plato**: an ancient Greek philosopher whose idealistic views of man have greatly influenced the world. 24. **Pleiades**: a constellation of brilliant stars often referred to by poets.

How will it be with kingdoms and with kings —  
 With those who shaped him to the thing he is —  
 When this dumb Terror shall rise to judge the world,  
 After the silence of the centuries?

## QUATRAINS

Edwin Markham, the thinker and teacher, has given us a number of quatrains which people like to stow away in their memories, such as these  
 How do you interpret the first one? Compare it with Emerson's idea in "Compensation" (page 475).

## EVEN SCALES

The robber is robbed by his riches;  
 The tyrant is dragged by his chain;  
 The schemer is snared by his cunning;  
 The slayer lies dead by the slain.

## IN BROTHERED

There is a destiny that makes us brothers:  
 None goes his way alone;  
 All that we send into the lives of others  
 Comes back into our own.

## YOUR WHISPERED SECRET

You told it to your friend; his oath was deep;  
 Now, here's a question for your wisdom shelf:  
 Why did you hope some other one would keep  
 The secret that you could not keep yourself?

## A CRY FOR STRENGTH

Give me heart touch with all that live,  
 And strength to speak my word;  
 But if that is denied me, give  
 The strength to live unheard.

## PREPAREDNESS

For all your days prepare,  
 And meet them ever alike:  
 When you are the anvil, bear —  
 When you are the hammer, strike.

## LINCOLN, THE MAN OF THE PEOPLE

When the Norn Mother saw the Whirlwind Hour  
 Greatening and darkening as it hurried on,  
 She left the Heaven of Heroes and came down  
 To make a man to meet the mortal need.  
 She took the tried clay of the common road — 5  
 Clay warm yet with the genial heat of earth,  
 Dashed through it all a strain of prophecy,  
 Tempered the heap with thrill of human tears,  
 Then mixed a laughter with the serious stuff.  
 Into the shape she breathed a flame to light 10  
 That tender, tragic, ever-changing face;  
 And laid on him a sense of the Mystic Powers,  
 Moving — all hushed — behind the mortal veil.  
 Here was a man to hold against the world,  
 A man to match the mountains and the sea. 15

The color of the ground was in him, the red earth,  
 The smack and tang of elemental things:  
 The rectitude and patience of the cliff,  
 The good will of the rain that loves all leaves,  
 The friendly welcome of the wayside well, 20  
 The courage of the bird that dares the sea,  
 The gladness of the wind that shakes the corn,  
 The pity of the snow that hides all scars,  
 The secrecy of streams that make their way  
 Under the mountain to the rifted rock, 25  
 The tolerance and equity of light  
 That gives as freely to the shrinking flower  
 As to the great oak flaring to the wind —  
 To the grave's low hill as to the Matterhorn  
 That shoulders out the sky. Sprung from the West, 30

He drank the valorous youth of a new world.  
 The strength of virgin forests braced his mind,  
 The hush of spacious prairies stilled his soul.

Up from log cabin to the Capitol,  
 One fire was on his spirit, one resolve — 35  
 To send the keen ax to the root of wrong,  
 Clearing a free way for the feet of God,  
 The eyes of conscience testing every stroke,  
 To make his deed the measure of a man.  
 He built the rail pile as he built the State, 40  
 Pouring his splendid strength through every blow:  
 The grip that swung the ax in Illinois  
 Was on the pen that set a people free.

So came the captain with the mighty heart;  
 And when the judgment thunders split the house, 45  
 Wrenching the rafters from their ancient rest,  
 He held the ridgepole up, and spiked again  
 The rafters of the home. He held his place —  
 Held the long purpose like a growing tree —  
 Held on through blame and faltered not at praise — 50  
 Towering in calm roughhewn sublimity.  
 And when he fell in whirlwind, he went down  
 As when a lordly cedar, green with boughs,  
 Goes down with a great shout upon the hills,  
 And leaves a lonesome place against the sky. 55

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

#### *The Man with the Hoe*

1. Point out words and details used to emphasize the picture of an utterly crushed being.
2. To whom are the questions of this poem addressed? In what way are these people held responsible?
3. Some critics have said that Millet never intended to portray such a hopeless creature but simply an honest workman resting. Bring copies of the picture to class and discuss which interpretation it suggests to you. These may be obtained from several of the publishers of inexpensive prints.
4. Vocabulary: portents (20), seraphim (22), immemorial (40), immedicable (41).

*Lincoln, the Man of the People*

5. What examples can you give from Lincoln's life to illustrate the various qualities mentioned by the poet?

6. In how many places in the poem do you find the idea associated in some way with trees? Why was this especially appropriate in the case of Lincoln? In what way is the conclusion a particularly powerful figure of speech?

7. Examine pictures of Lincoln and of his statues.

*For Your Vocabulary*

8. Markham stresses the injustice done to "The Man with the Hoe" in such words as *profaned* (page 605) and *perfidious* (page 605). We *profane* something when we debase it by wrong or unjust use. (Does this definition throw any light on *profane* language?) Similarly, a *perfidious* wrong is one that violates faith or obligation and is, therefore, base and ignoble. Such evils are well called *infamies* by the poet, for that which is *infamous* is base or vile.

*For Ambitious Students*

9. What examples can you find in history of uprisings of peasants or other workers as suggested in "The Man with the Hoe" (line 45), "When whirlwinds of rebellion shake all shores"? Graphic pictures of such outbursts are to be found in Dickens's *Tale of Two Cities* and *Barnaby Rudge* and in Galsworthy's *Strife*.

## EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935)

If Lanier can be called a musician in poetry, Edwin Arlington Robinson may be styled a portrait painter in poetry. A whole gallery of men is revealed to our eye and, better yet, to our imagination as we turn the pages of Robinson's books. Sometimes their whole souls are laid open to us; sometimes we catch only a suggestion beneath a suave exterior. Sometimes they are treated earnestly, sometimes half cynically, sometimes with whimsical tenderness. In every case they are made very real, very human. Robinson came from Maine, attended Harvard, and, though he lived most of the time in New York, was distinctly associated with New England, where the "Tilbury Town" and the "Town down the River" of his poems are located. He thrice won the Pulitzer Prize and many consider him the greatest recent American poet. Besides studying modern men he turned his attention to the Arthurian legends and in his long poems,

*Merlin*, *Lancelot*, and *Tristram*, did the most extensive work based on these stories since Tennyson, though differing widely in treatment from the earlier poet. All the poems below will be found in the 1930 edition of his *Collected Poems*.

### MINIVER CHEEVY

- Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,  
     Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;  
 He wept that he was ever born,  
     And he had reasons.
- Miniver loved the days of old 5  
     When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;  
 The vision of a warrior bold  
     Would set him dancing.
- Miniver sighed for what was not,  
     And dreamed, and rested from his labors; 10  
 He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,  
     And Priam's neighbors.
- Miniver mourned the ripe renown  
     That made so many a name so fragrant;  
 He mourned Romance, now on the town, 15  
     And Art, a vagrant.
- Miniver loved the Medici,  
     Albeit he had never seen one;  
 He would have sinned incessantly  
     Could he have been one. 20
- Miniver cursed the commonplace  
     And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;  
 He missed the medieval grace  
     Of iron clothing.
- Miniver scorned the gold he sought, 25  
     But sore annoyed was he without it;  
 Miniver thought, and thought, and thought  
     And thought about it.

11. *Thebes*: a famous city of ancient Greece. 12. *Camelot*: the city of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. 13. *Priam*: the king of Troy during the time the Greeks were besieging it. 14. *Medici*: a highly cultivated but often unprincipled family of Florence, Italy, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,  
 Scratched his head and kept on thinking; 30  
 Miniver coughed, and called it fate,  
 And kept on drinking.

## RICHARD CORY

"Richard Cory" represents almost the reverse of "Miniver Cheevy." Richard Cory seemed to be everything that anyone could wish; Miniver Cheevy just took it out in wishing. He lived his dream life and "kept on drinking," while Richard Cory went home one night and —

Whenever Richard Cory went downtown,  
 We people on the pavement looked at him:  
 He was a gentleman from sole to crown,  
 Clean-favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed, 5  
 And he was always human when he talked;  
 But still he fluttered pulses when he said,  
 "Good morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich — yes, richer than a king —  
 And admirably schooled in every grace: 10  
 In fine, we thought that he was everything  
 To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,  
 And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;  
 And Richard Cory, one calm summer night, 15  
 Went home and put a bullet through his head.

## BEWICK FINZER

Bewick Finzer is a cousin to Miniver Cheevy and Richard Cory. He is a sad picture of the man who had achieved his dream, that of wealth, and cracked under the strain when he lost it. But he neither took to drink nor shot himself; he kept up his futile dream and became a nuisance to his friends.



Time was when his half-million drew  
 The breath of six per cent;  
 But soon the worm of what-was-not  
 Fed hard on his content;  
 And something crumbled in his brain 5  
 When his half-million went.

Time passed, and filled along with his  
 The place of many more;  
 Time came, and hardly one of us 10  
 Had credence to restore,  
 From what appeared one day, the man  
 Whom we had known before.

The broken voice, the withered neck,  
 The coat worn out with care,  
 The cleanliness of indigence, 15  
 The brilliance of despair,  
 The fond imponderable dreams  
 Of affluence — all were there.

Poor Finzer, with his dreams and schemes,  
 Fares hard now in the race, 20  
 With heart and eye that have a task  
 When he looks in the face  
 Of one who might so easily  
 Have been in Finzer's place.

He comes unflinching for the loan 25  
 We give and then forget;  
 He comes, and probably for years  
 Will he be coming yet, —  
 Familiar as an old mistake,  
 And futile as regret. 30

### THE HOUSE ON THE HILL

If the preceding poems of Robinson's are portraits, this one is the exact converse — a picture of the absence of human beings. How the insistent loneliness of the deserted house is brought out through the repetition! Our curiosity about this house is stimulated, but not satisfied. What kind of people once lived there? Perhaps a Richard Cory or a Bewick Finzer?

They are all gone away,  
The house is shut and still,  
There is nothing more to say.

Through broken walls and gray  
The wind blows bleak and shrill: 5  
They are all gone away.

Nor is there one today  
To speak them good or ill:  
There is nothing more to say.

Why is it then we stray 10  
Around the sunken sill?  
They are all gone away.

And our poor fancy-play  
For them is wasted skill:  
There is nothing more to say. 15

There is ruin and decay  
In the house on the hill:  
They are all gone away,  
There is nothing more to say.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

##### *Miniver Cheevy*

1. In what spirit does the poet present Miniver? How does he make you feel about him? Indicate lines to prove your points. Notice how the name is repeated at the beginning of each stanza.

2. Did you ever know anyone like this? Would you call him a common type?

##### *Richard Cory*

3. Why does one gasp on reading the last two lines for the first time? What suppositions flock to your mind as to possible causes for Richard's deed?

4. Is such a situation possible in life? Is it common? What bit of philosophy about life does it suggest to your mind?

5. What verbs in the second stanza have unusual force and originality? Explain them.

6. How do you explain the first two lines of the last stanza?

*Bewick Finzer*

7. How do you interpret "the worm of what-was-not"? Can you put into simple words just what happened to Finzer in the first stanza?

8. How do the people of the town regard Finzer now?

9. Which of the three men portrayed in these three poems do you consider most pathetic? Why?

10. Vocabulary: credence (10), imponderable (17), futile (30).

*For Your Vocabulary*

11. In the third stanza the poet uses two good terms for the contrasting states in which Bewick Finzer found himself, *indigence* and *affluence*. *Indigence* is simply a state of being in need. Care of the *indigent* has become a serious problem in modern society. *Affluence* is a state of abundance, with riches flowing in.

*For Ambitious Students*

12. If you like to draw, try making sketches to show the differences in personality of the three men. Or draw a sketch of some deserted house in your community, bringing out its desolation as Robinson does in the last poem.

13. "The House on the Hill" is written in an old French form called a *villanelle*, which we do not often see in American poetry. By studying the poem first, try to discover what the characteristics of a villanelle are. Then check yourself by referring to the dictionary. Try writing a villanelle of your own. Does it seem an easy or difficult form to write?

14. Write little stories or dialogues in which you bring out the personalities of one or more of the three men. Or write an account of conditions in modern life that tend to produce men like any of the three. Or write a sketch or story based on some deserted house in your community. See opening of Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" for suggestions on creating a desolate atmosphere.

## AMY LOWELL (1874-1925)

You will probably like Amy Lowell either tremendously or not at all. She seldom leaves her readers lukewarm. She belonged to the renowned Lowell family of Cambridge, which has already been mentioned under James Russell Lowell. The famous poet was a cousin of her grandfather; one of her brothers was a distinguished astronomer and another was president of Harvard University. Miss Lowell's education was entirely indi-

vidual through tutoring, extensive travel, and her own determined study of literature and verse technique after she decided at twenty-eight to become a poet. She did not try to rush into print, but laid careful foundations for herself and issued her first volume ten years after she had come to this decision. It was not, however, until her second volume, *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed* (1914), that her individual style was evident. She became the chief exponent of the Imagists and the promoter of "polyphonic prose."

Like other innovators, Miss Lowell became the target for both witticism and abuse, which gradually diminished as the public became more accustomed to her manner and realized that when she wished she could be a master of the regular rhythms as well as of "free verse." Finally when her death came unexpectedly, through a paralytic stroke, the press was overflowing with praise of her inestimable contributions to American literature.

In addition to her original verse Miss Lowell made detailed studies of foreign literatures, notably her English versions of Chinese poems, her critical essays on French poets, and her two-volume study of John Keats. Following the footsteps of her famous poet-relative she wrote *A Critical Fable* as a sequel to his *Fable for Critics*. Her *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* presents six of our modern poets in a style which high-school students can enjoy reading.

Here are two poems about persons, both from *Sword Blades and Poppy Seed*. Note how different they are from the pictures given us by Masters and Robinson — no names attached, no probing into their past histories or their present characters; simply the impression upon the poetic imagination made by these opposite types, the aura, as it were, surrounding the visible person.

## A L A D Y

You are beautiful and faded  
Like an old opera tune  
Played upon a harpsichord;  
Or like the sun-flooded silks  
Of an eighteenth-century boudoir. 5  
In your eyes  
Smolder the fallen roses of outlived minutes,  
And the perfume of your soul  
Is vague and suffusing,  
With the pungence of sealed spice jars. 10  
Your half tones delight me,  
And I grow mad with gazing  
At your blent colors.

My vigor is a new-minted penny,  
Which I cast at your feet. 15  
Gather it up from the dust,  
That its sparkle may amuse you.

## MUSIC

The neighbor sits in his window and plays the flute.  
From my bed I can hear him,  
And the round notes flutter and tap about the room,  
And hit against each other,  
Blurring to unexpected chords. 5  
It is very beautiful,  
With the little flute notes all about me,  
In the darkness.

In the daytime,  
The neighbor eats bread and onions with one hand 10  
And copies music with the other.  
He is fat and has a bald head,  
So I do not look at him,  
But run quickly past his window.  
There is always the sky to look at, 15  
Or the water in the well!

But when night comes and he plays his flute,  
I think of him as a young man,  
With gold seals hanging from his watch,  
And a blue coat with silver buttons. 20

As I lie in my bed  
The flute notes push against my ears and lips,  
And I go to sleep, dreaming.

## PATTERNS

"Patterns," from *Men, Women, and Ghosts*, is a lyric poem — deeply emotional and personal, as a good lyric should be. There is more than a touch of the romantic in both the setting and the suggestions of a story;

but the poet was not merely describing a woman in a beautiful garden, waiting for her lover, nor did she intend to tell a story, although both of these elements are present. These are merely part of the "pattern"; that is, the woman of the poem is figured as being and doing what a highly sensitized and cultured person might be expected to do under the circumstances. Through it all, the poet is also expressing an attitude toward life; and that is the most important of all.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| I walk down the garden paths.                   |    |
| And all the daffodils                           |    |
| Are blowing, and the bright blue squills.       |    |
| I walk down the patterned garden paths          |    |
| In my stiff brocaded gown.                      | 5  |
| With my powdered hair and jeweled fan,          |    |
| I too am a rare                                 |    |
| Pattern. As I wander down                       |    |
| The garden paths.                               |    |
| My dress is richly figured,                     | 10 |
| And the train                                   |    |
| Makes a pink and silver stain                   |    |
| On the gravel, and the thrift                   |    |
| Of the borders.                                 |    |
| Just a plate of current fashion,                | 15 |
| Tripping by in high-heeled, ribboned shoes.     |    |
| Not a softness anywhere about me,               |    |
| Only whalebone and brocade.                     |    |
| And I sink on a seat in the shade               |    |
| Of a lime tree. For my passion                  | 20 |
| Wars against the stiff brocade.                 |    |
| The daffodils and squills                       |    |
| Flutter in the breeze                           |    |
| As they please.                                 |    |
| And I weep:                                     | 25 |
| For the lime tree is in blossom                 |    |
| And one small flower has dropped upon my bosom. |    |
| And the plashing of water drops                 |    |
| In the marble fountain                          |    |
| Comes down the garden paths.                    | 30 |
| The dripping never stops.                       |    |
| Underneath my stiffened gown                    |    |

Is the softness of a woman bathing in a marble basin,  
 A basin in the midst of hedges grown  
 So thick, she cannot see her lover hiding, 35  
 But she guesses he is near,  
 And the sliding of the water  
 Seems the stroking of a dear  
 Hand upon her.  
 What is summer in a fine brocaded gown! 40  
 I should like to see it lying in a heap upon the ground.  
 All the pink and silver crumpled up on the ground.

I would be the pink and silver as I ran along the paths,  
 And he would stumble after,  
 Bewildered by my laughter. 45  
 I should see the sun flashing from his sword hilt and the buckles on  
 his shoes.

I would choose  
 To lead him in a maze along the patterned paths,  
 A bright and laughing maze for my heavy-booted lover.  
 Till he caught me in the shade, 50  
 And the buttons of his waistcoat bruised my body as he clasped me,  
 Aching, melting, unafraid.  
 With the shadows of the leaves and the sun drops,  
 And the plopping of the water drops,  
 All about us in the open afternoon — 55  
 I am very like to swoon  
 With the weight of this brocade,  
 For the sun sifts through the shade.

Underneath the fallen blossom  
 In my bosom, 60  
 Is a letter I have hid.  
 It was brought to me this morning by a rider from the duke.  
 "Madam, we regret to inform you that Lord Hartwell  
 Died in action Thursday se'nnight."  
 As I read it in the white morning sunlight, 65  
 The letters squirmed like snakes.  
 "Any answer, Madam?" said my footman.  
 "No," I told him.  
 "See that the messenger takes some refreshment.  
 No, no answer." 70

And I walked into the garden,  
 Up and down the patterned paths,  
 In my stiff, correct brocade.  
 The blue and yellow flowers stood up proudly in the sun,  
 Each one. 75  
 I stood upright too,  
 Held rigid to the pattern  
 By the stiffness of my gown.  
 Up and down I walked  
 Up and down. 80

In a month he would have been my husband.  
 In a month, here, underneath this lime,  
 We would have broke the pattern;  
 He for me, and I for him,  
 He as colonel, I as lady, 85  
 On this shady seat.  
 He had a whim  
 That sunlight carried blessing.  
 And I answered, "It shall be as you have said."  
 Now he is dead. 90

In summer and in winter I shall walk  
 Up and down  
 The patterned garden paths  
 In my stiff brocaded gown.  
 The squills and daffodils 95  
 Will give place to pillared roses, and to asters, and to snow.  
 I shall go  
 Up and down,  
 In my gown.  
 Gorgeously arrayed, 100  
 Boned and stayed.  
 And the softness of my body will be guarded from embrace  
 By each button, hook, and lace.  
 For the man who should loose me is dead,  
 Fighting with the Duke in Flanders, 105  
 In a pattern called a war.  
 Christ! What are patterns for?



## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In the first two short poems point out the contrast between the writer and the person observed. What kind of person is suggested by the "new-minted penny"? Is Amy Lowell speaking in her own person in these two poems or is she speaking in the person of an entirely imaginary character?

2. Find evidence in both these poems that the writer likes antique things; that she follows the principles of the Imagists. (See page 461 for their program.)

3. How many different kinds of "patterns" can you find in the poem by that name? Look up "pattern" in the dictionary and find out how it fits the idea of the poem.

4. Notice some of the careful details of description and how they add to the picture. What details suggest a certain country and certain century for the story?

5. Tell briefly the story back of the picture. How does the lady's manner of receiving the fatal news fit into the pattern idea?

6. This poem is typical of the best so-called "free verse." Comment on the rhythm, the irregularity of the line lengths, the rhyme or lack of it, and the general effect of it all.

7. What is meant by the last line? What values do "patterns" have in life? When are we likely to rebel against them?

*For Ambitious Students*

8. Draw illustrations of the Lowell characters. Are they more or less easy to represent than the Robinson characters?

9. Read her poem "Bombardment" and see if you can find a difference between this "polyphonic prose" and free verse. This is an excellent poem for a good reader to present orally to the class. Write a description of a modern air raid in this style.

10. Read some of the interesting accounts of Miss Lowell's unique personality and report to the class. There is a good account in Louis Untermeyer's autobiography, *From Another World*.

## ROBERT FROST (1875- )

Strange that a poet who represents the very essence of New England farm life and who never writes of anything else should have spent the first ten years of his life in San Francisco and have been named after the Southern general Robert E. Lee! Yet Robert Frost was a genuine New

Englander by ancestry and disposition, and those first ten years before the death of his father and his return East with his mother seem to have left no impression on his poetry. Neither did the mill town of Lawrence, Massachusetts, where he went to school and later worked as bobbin boy in a mill. It was always the country that charmed him. Spasmodic attempts at a college education both at Dartmouth and at Harvard were given up through lack of interest. He supported his family by various temporary jobs, teaching, cobbling, editing, and the like. Finally his grandfather bought him a farm in New Hampshire where, for a number of years, he worked and wrote but was unable to get much published. The sale of the farm enabled him to move his family to England and it was there, strange to say, that his distinctly American volumes, *A Boy's Will* and *North of Boston*, were published and received acclamation. He returned to America with his literary reputation established, but with no desire to give up farming in the New England hills. Intervals of lecturing and of teaching at Amherst and the University of Michigan are the only breaks in his peaceful farm life.

More than any other living poet, Frost gives us pastoral poetry, not the artificial picture of country life viewed from a classical library, but the simple, genuine life he knows, expressed in the idiom of daily speech. It is the combination of this familiar speech with the rhythm of blank verse which marks the distinctive style of Robert Frost's poetry. His subject matter is sometimes the minutely observed details of nature interpreted through human experience, sometimes the exploration of the minds of his farm people with their instincts, their terrors, their griefs, and often their dumb inertia.

All the poems below will be found in Robert Frost's *Collected Poems*.

## THE PASTURE

"The Pasture" was printed as a motto at the beginning of *North of Boston* and may well serve as an invitation to become acquainted with the work of Robert Frost.

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;  
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away  
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):  
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf  
That's standing by the mother. It's so young,  
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.  
I shan't be gone long. — You come too.

## BIRCHES

Birch trees are fairly common in many parts of the country, and many boys besides Robert Frost have no doubt swung on them; but to the poet who in retrospect sees the birches and recalls his boyhood delight in swinging on them they are suggestive of some of the most fundamental problems of life. That sounds as though you were about to read something difficult and involved, but such is far from being the case. Just as the birch tree is an everyday sight, so is the language of the poet that of everyday. Frost writes in a way that seems conversational, as though he were talking to a group of friends by a fireside, and that is one of the charms of his poetry.

When I see birches bend to left and right  
 Across the line of straighter darker trees,  
 I like to think some boy's been swinging them.  
 But swinging doesn't bend them down to stay.  
 Ice storms do that. Often you must have seen them 5  
 Loaded with ice a sunny winter morning  
 After a rain. They click upon themselves  
 As the breeze rises, and turn many-colored  
 As the stir cracks and crazes their enamel.  
 Soon the sun's warmth makes them shed crystal shells 10  
 Shattering and avalanching on the snow crust —  
 Such heaps of broken glass to sweep away  
 You'd think the inner dome of heaven had fallen.  
 They are dragged to the withered bracken by the load,  
 And they seem not to break; though, once they are bowed 15  
 So low for long, they never right themselves:  
 You may see their trunks arching in the woods  
 Years afterward, trailing their leaves on the ground  
 Like girls on hands and knees that throw their hair  
 Before them over their heads to dry in the sun. 20  
 But I was going to say when Truth broke in  
 With all her matter-of-fact about the ice storm  
 (Now am I free to be poetical?)  
 I should prefer to have some boy bend them  
 As he went out and in to fetch the cows — 25  
 Some boy too far from town to learn baseball,  
 Whose only play was what he found himself,  
 Summer or winter, and could play alone.  
 One by one he subdued his father's trees  
 By riding them down over and over again 30

Until he took the stiffness out of them,  
 And not one but hung limp, not that was left  
 For him to conquer. He learned all there was  
 To learn about not launching out too soon  
 And so not carrying the tree away  
 Clear to the ground. He kept his poise  
 To the top branches, lifting carefully  
 With the same pains that you use to fill a cup  
 Up to the brim, and even above the brim.  
 Then he flung one over his first, with a swish,  
 Kicking his way down through the air to the ground.  
 So was I once myself a swinger of birches;  
 And so I dream of going back to be.  
 It's the best of all possible considerations,  
 And I'm as much like a pathless wood  
 When your face burns and tickles with the cobwebs  
 Behind your ears, and one eye is weeping  
 From a twig's having lashed across it open.  
 I'd like to get away from earth awhile  
 And then come back to it and begin over.  
 But my fate willfully misunderstand me  
 And half grant what I wish and snatch me away  
 Not to return. Earth's the right place for love:  
 I don't know where it's likely to go better.  
 I'd like to go by climbing a birch tree,  
 And climb black branches up a snow-white trunk  
 Toward heaven, till the tree could bear no more,  
 But dipped its top and set me down again.  
 That would be good both going and coming back.  
 One could do worse than be a swinger of birches.

### TOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING

The title suggests, this poem is mainly a picture or, perhaps, an epi-  
 gram within the picture. But to the poet there was much more, as you  
 can see from the last three lines.

Whose woods these are I think I know.  
 His house is in the village though;  
 He will not see me stopping here  
 To watch his woods fill with snow.

The horse must think it queer  
 To stop without a farmhouse near  
 Between the woods and frozen lake  
 The darkest evening of the year.

5

He gives his harness bells a shake  
 To ask if this is all or mistake.  
 The only other sound was the sweep  
 Of easy wind and downy flocks of snow.

10

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,  
 But I have promises to keep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep,  
 And miles to go before I sleep.

15

### MENDING WALL

The poetry back of commonplace labor is evident in the imagination of Robert Frost. Here we have an ordinary enough task in New England, where low stone walls are the common boundaries between property. Two farmers move along either side of the wall repairing the winter's ravages. One is a practical, unimaginative man who thinks only conventionally as he has been taught in the past. The other has a lively fancy and a questioning mind. There is something fresh and flavorful in his mental approach even to this simple job. He is a poet.

Something there is that doesn't love a wall,  
 That sends the frozen ground swell under it,  
 And spills the upper boulders in the sun;  
 And makes gaps even two can pass abreast.  
 The work of hunters is another thing:  
 I have come after them and made repair  
 Where they have left not one stone on stone,  
 But they would have the rabbit out of hiding,  
 To please the yelping dogs. The gaps I mean,  
 No one has seen them made or heard them made,  
 But at spring mendingtime we find them there.  
 I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;  
 And on a day we meet to walk the line  
 And set the wall between us once again.  
 We keep the wall between us as we go.  
 To each the boulders that have fallen to each.

5

10

And some are loaves and some so nearly balls  
 We have to use a spell to make them balance:  
 "Stay where you are until our backs are turned!"  
 We wear our fingers rough with handling them. 20  
 Oh, just another kind of outdoor game,  
 One on a side. It comes to little more:  
 There where it is we do not need the wall:  
 He is all pine and I am apple orchard.  
 My apple trees will never get across 25  
 And eat the cones under his pines, I tell him.  
 He only says, "Good fences make good neighbors."  
 Spring is the mischief in me, and I wonder  
 If I could put a notion in his head:  
 "Why do they make good neighbors? Isn't it 30  
 Where there are cows? But here there are no cows.  
 Before I built a wall I'd ask to know  
 What I was walling in or walling out,  
 And to whom I was like to give offense.  
 Something there is that doesn't love a wall, 35  
 That wants it down." I could say "Elves" to him,  
 But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather  
 He said it for himself. I see him there  
 Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top  
 In each hand, like an old stone savage armed. 40  
 He moves in darkness as it seems to me,  
 Not of woods only and the shade of trees.  
 He will not go behind his father's saying,  
 And he likes having thought of it so well  
 He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors." 45

## THE BIRTHPLACE

In both "The Birthplace" and the poem that follows may be noted the qualities already mentioned in connection with Frost's other poems — simplicity of language, concreteness of picture, and a final twist that is of the essence of life.

Here further up the mountain slope  
 Than there was ever any hope,  
 My father built, inclosed a spring,  
 Strung chains of walls round everything,

Subdued the growth of earth to grass 5  
 And brought our various lives to pass.  
 A dozen boys and girls we were.  
 The mountain seemed to like the stir,  
 And made of us a little while —  
 With always something in her smile. 10  
 Today she wouldn't know our name.  
 (No girl's, of course, has stayed the same.)  
 The mountain pushed us off her knees.  
 And now her lap is full of trees.

### A MINOR BIRD

I have wished a bird would fly away,  
 And not sing by my house all day;  
  
 Have clapped my hands at him from the door  
 When it seemed as if I could bear no more.  
  
 The fault must partly have been in me.  
 The bird was not to blame for his key.  
  
 And of course there must be something wrong  
 In wanting to silence any song.

### THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN

This is the best of Frost's longer narrative poems. While it tells a story, definite and tragic, there is no action; merely a conversation between a New England farmer and his wife. As always in Frost's work, there are graphic pictures which enhance the setting and in this poem help to soften the sting of the tragedy that the reader feels to be impending. Frost, although so much of his poetry concerns the Yankee farmer, never uses dialect to create a rustic effect.

Mary sat musing on the lamp flame at the table  
 Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,  
 She ran on tiptoe down the darkened passage  
 To meet him in the doorway with the news  
 And put him on his guard. "Silas is back." 5

She pushed him outward with her through the door  
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.  
She took the market things from Warren's arms  
And set them on the porch, then drew him down  
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

10

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?  
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.  
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?  
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'  
What good is he? Who else will harbor him  
At his age for the little he can do?  
What help he is there's no depending on.  
Off he goes always when I need him most.  
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,  
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,  
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'  
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay  
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'  
'Someone else can.' 'Then someone else will have to.'  
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself  
If that was what it was. You can be certain,  
When he begins like that, there's someone at him  
Trying to coax him off with pocket money —  
In hayingtime, when any help is scarce.  
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

15

20

25

30

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.  
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,  
Huddled against the barn door fast asleep,  
A miserable sight, and frightening, too —  
You needn't smile — I didn't recognize him —  
I wasn't looking for him — and he's changed.  
Wait till you see."

35

"Where did you say he'd been?"



“ He didn’t say. I dragged him to the house,  
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.  
I tried to make him talk about his travels,  
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off.” 40

“ What did he say? Did he say anything? ”

“ But little.”

“ Anything? Mary, confess 45  
He said he’d come to ditch the meadow for me.”

“ Warren! ”

“ But did he? I just want to know.”

“ Of course he did. What would you have him say?  
Surely you wouldn’t grudge the poor old man  
Some humble way to save his self-respect. 50  
He added, if you really care to know,  
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.  
That sounds like something you have heard before?  
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way  
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look 55  
Two or three times — he made me feel so queer —  
To see if he was talking in his sleep.  
He ran on Harold Wilson — you remember —  
The boy you had in haying four years since.  
He’s finished school, and teaching in his college. 60  
Silas declares you’ll have to get him back.  
He says they two will make a team for work:  
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!  
The way he mixed that in with other things.  
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft 65  
On education — you know how they fought  
All through July under the blazing sun,  
Silas up on the cart to build the load,  
Harold along beside to pitch it on.”

“ Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot.” 70

" Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.  
 You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!  
 Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.  
 After so many years he still keeps finding  
 Good arguments he sees he might have used. 75  
 I sympathize. I know just how it feels  
 To think of the right thing to say too late.  
 Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.  
 He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying  
 He studied Latin like the violin 80  
 Because he liked it — that an argument!  
 He said he couldn't make the boy believe  
 He could find water with a hazel prong —  
 Which showed how much good school had ever done him.  
 He wanted to go over that. But most of all 85  
 He thinks if he could have another chance  
 To teach him how to build a load of hay — "

" I know, that's Silas's one accomplishment.  
 He bundles every forkful in its place,  
 And tags and numbers it for future reference, 90  
 So he can find and easily dislodge it  
 In the unloading. Silas does that well.  
 He takes it out in bunches like big birds' nests.  
 You never see him standing on the hay  
 He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself." 95

" He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be  
 Some good perhaps to someone in the world.  
 He hates to see a boy the fool of books.  
 Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,  
 And nothing to look backward to with pride, 100  
 And nothing to look forward to with hope,  
 So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,  
 Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.  
 Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw 105

83. **find water with a hazel prong**: a farm superstition that a proper location for a well can be ascertained by walking around holding a branch in front of one. The branch is supposed to bend down at the point where water is to be found under the surface.

And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand  
 Among the harplike morning-glory strings,  
 Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,  
 As if she played unheard the tenderness  
 That wrought on him beside her in the night. 110  
 "Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:  
 You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?  
 It all depends on what you mean by home.  
 Of course he's nothing to us, any more 115  
 Than was the hound that came a stranger to us  
 Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,  
 They have to take you in."

"I should have called it  
 Something you somehow haven't to deserve." 120

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,  
 Picked up a little stick, and brought it back  
 And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.  
 "Silas has better claim on us, you think,  
 Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles 125  
 As the road winds would bring him to his door.  
 Silas has walked that far no doubt today.  
 Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,  
 A somebody — director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though." 130

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.  
 I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right  
 To take him in, and might be willing to —  
 He may be better than appearances.  
 But have some pity on Silas. Do you think 135  
 If he'd had any pride in claiming kin

Or anything he looked for from his brother,  
He'd keep so still about him all this time? "

" I wonder what's between them."

" I can tell you.

Silas is what he is — we wouldn't mind him — 140

But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.

He never did a thing so very bad.

He don't know why he isn't quite as good

As anyone. He won't be made ashamed

To please his brother, worthless though he is." 145

" I can't think Si ever hurt anyone."

" No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay

And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair back.

He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.

You must go in and see what you can do. 150

I made the bed up for him there tonight.

You'll be surprised at him — how much he's broken.

His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

" I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

" I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself. 155

But, Warren, please remember how it is:

He's come to help you ditch the meadow.

He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.

He may not speak of it, and then he may.

I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud 160

Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.

Then there were three, making a dim row,

The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.

Warren returned — too soon, it seemed to her,

Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited. 165

" Warren? " she questioned.

" Dead," was all he answered.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In "Birches" point out words and details that make the description of the trees especially vivid. Have you seen ice storms such as Frost describes? Which makes the more beautiful transformation of the world, an ice storm or a snowstorm? What application to his own life does the poet make at the end?

2. In "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" what is the significance back of the apparently simple incident? What effect does the repetition of the last line have?

3. In "Mending Wall" how do you interpret the saying, "Good fences make good neighbors"? Discuss the different personalities of the two farmers as shown by their attitude toward the wall. With which do you agree?

4. How does Frost's method of linking his observations to some great truth of human life differ from the "moral tag" of the earlier New England poets?

*The Death of the Hired Man*

5. Notice how simple the vocabulary of this poem is. See whether you can find a single word in it with which you are unfamiliar.

6. In the second stanza, lines 11-30, remember that Warren is saying all this to his wife. Between whom is the conversation he is quoting?

7. What points of contrast do you find between Silas and Harold Wilson? Are these differences principally between youth and age, or between two kinds of background and education?

8. Study the two definitions of home (lines 118-20). Which do you prefer?

9. What does the discussion about the rich brother (lines 124-45) add to our understanding of Silas?

10. What do you learn of the character of Warren and Mary from their conversation?

11. What makes the end of the poem especially impressive?

*For Ambitious Students*

12. In comparison with the ice storm in "Birches" bring to class and read aloud the description of the snowstorm in Whittier's "Snowbound," and Emerson's short poem "The Snowstorm." If you would like to collect winter poems, look up "A Snowstorm" by Henry Van Dyke, "Snow Shower" by Bryant, "Snow Song" by Lucy Larcom, "An Arctic Night" by Fridtjof Nansen, "To a Snowflake" by Francis Thompson, "The Frost Spirit" by Whittier. See also the Prelude to Part Second of "The Vision of Sir Launfal" (page 529).

13. Apply the ideas of the two men in "Mending Wall" to the international situation. Write a short dialogue between two nations in regard to the "wall" between them.

14. Study the meter of Frost's poetry. How many of his poems are in blank verse? Compare with passages of blank verse in Shakespeare and other poets. Try to find out what makes it have such a different sound and general effect upon the reader.

15. Let two well-qualified students dramatize "The Death of the Hired Man" before the class. Be careful not to spoil the quiet pathos of the poem.

### EDGAR LEE MASTERS (1869- )

Imagine a book of poetry being a "best seller," shouldering out all the love stories, detective stories, travel books, and other kinds of prose which usually appear in that class. Yet that is what happened in 1915 when the *Spoon River Anthology* appeared in the bookshops. So original in its conception, so enticing in its varied pictures, so provocative of thought and discussion did it prove to be that everyone had to read it. Edgar Lee Masters was an Illinois lawyer-poet who, like Edwin Markham, had been writing for years without creating a ripple of excitement. Too much of his verse had been merely a poor imitation of the English poets whom he had studied. Finally at the suggestion of his friend, William Marion Reedy, editor of *Reedy's Mirror*, he turned his attention to his own surroundings and produced a masterpiece. Through the reading of the *Greek Anthology*, a collection of ancient poems, he conceived the idea of a series of epitaphs on the inhabitants of a fictitious Illinois town written by the dead themselves. Reading this book is like being present at the Day of Judgment, when the dead arise and the truth about their lives is set free. All the multiple experiences of village life are here represented, the good and the bad crowded together, the joys and aspirations recorded, the bitternesses and ironies reiterated, the misunderstandings and mysteries revealed. Mr. Robert Littell has well summarized the impression left after reading the book: "Their faces, less distinct than the gossip, detective work, and idealistic generalization in which they swam, have long since disappeared. There were no characters, and what we mistook for such were case histories in the clinic of life's hospital, with Mr. Masters as surgeon rather than artist."

The names of the men and women one indeed forgets, but can one ever look again upon a cemetery in a small town, or even the town itself, without repeopling it in imagination with many of these lives?

Anne Rutledge is the only actual historical character among those which

follow. She will be remembered as the sweetheart of Lincoln's early life, lost to him through death.

## ANNE RUTLEDGE

Out of me unworthy and unknown  
 The vibrations of deathless music;  
 "With malice toward none, with charity for all."  
 Out of me the forgiveness of millions toward millions,  
 And the beneficent face of a nation 5  
 Shining with justice and truth.  
 I am Anne Rutledge who sleep beneath these weeds,  
 Beloved in life of Abraham Lincoln,  
 Wedded to him, not through union,  
 But through separation. 10  
 Bloom forever, O Republic,  
 From the dust of my bosom!

## JOHN HORACE BURLESON

I won the prize essay at school  
 Here in the village,  
 And published a novel before I was twenty-five.  
 I went to the city for themes and to enrich my art;  
 There married the banker's daughter, 5  
 And later became president of the bank —  
 Always looking forward to some leisure  
 To write an epic novel of the war.  
 Meanwhile friend of the great, and lover of letters,  
 And host to Matthew Arnold and to Emerson. 10  
 An after-dinner speaker, writing essays  
 For local clubs. At last brought here —  
 My boyhood home, you know —  
 Not even a little tablet in Chicago  
 To keep my name alive. 15  
 How great it is to write the single line:  
 "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean, roll!"

10. **Matthew Arnold**: a noted English writer and lecturer, much entertained in America. 17. "Roll on . . . roll": This line is one of the most frequently quoted lines written by the English poet Lord Byron.

## MRS. GEORGE REECE

To this generation I would say:  
Memorize some bit of verse of truth or beauty.  
It may serve a turn in your life.  
My husband had nothing to do  
With the fall of the bank — he was only cashier. 5  
The wreck was due to the president, Thomas Rhodes,  
And his vain, unscrupulous son.  
Yet my husband was sent to prison,  
And I was left with the children,  
To feed and clothe and school them. 10  
And I did it, and sent them forth  
Into the world all clean and strong,  
And all through the wisdom of Pope, the poet:  
“ Act well your part, there all the honor lies.”

## GEORGE GRAY

I have studied many times  
The marble which was chiseled for me —  
A boat with a furled sail at rest in a harbor.  
In truth it pictures not my destination  
But my life. 5  
For love was offered me and I shrank from its disillusionment;  
Sorrow knocked at my door, but I was afraid;  
Ambition called to me, but I dreaded the chances.  
Yet all the while I hungered for meaning in my life  
And now I know that we must lift the sail 10  
And catch the winds of destiny  
Wherever they drive the boat.  
To put meaning in one's life may end in madness,  
But life without meaning is the torture  
Of restlessness and vague desire — 15  
It is a boat longing for the sea and yet afraid.

## LUCINDA MATLOCK

I went to the dances at Chandlerville,  
And played snap-out at Winchester.  
One time we changed partners,



Driving home in the moonlight of middle June,  
 And then I found Davis. 5  
 We were married and lived together for seventy years,  
 Enjoying, working, raising the twelve children,  
 Eight of whom we lost  
 Ere I had reached the age of sixty.  
 I spun, I wove, I kept the house, I nursed the sick, 10  
 I made the garden, and for holiday  
 Rambled over the fields where sang the larks,  
 And by Spoon River gathering many a shell,  
 And many a flower and medicinal weed —  
 Shouting to the wooded hills, singing to the green valleys. 15  
 At ninety-six I had lived enough, that is all,  
 And passed to a sweet repose.  
 What is this I hear of sorrow and weariness,  
 Anger, discontent and drooping hopes?  
 Degenerate sons and daughters, 20  
 Life is too strong for you —  
 It takes life to love Life.

## SILENCE

None of the many volumes of poetry which Masters published after the *Spoon River Anthology* was as powerful, but in *Songs and Satires* (1916) is to be found one poem which ranks with his best. It is one of those impressive meditations which one doesn't wish to talk about after reading, but just think over in silence.

I have known the silence of the stars and of the sea,  
 And the silence of the city when it pauses,  
 And the silence of a man and a maid,  
 And the silence for which music alone finds the word,  
 And the silence of the woods before the winds of spring begin, 5  
 And the silence of the sick  
 When their eyes roam about the room.  
 And I ask: For the depths  
 Of what use is language?  
 A beast of the field moans a few times 10  
 When death takes its young:  
 And we are voiceless in the presence of realities —  
 We cannot speak.

A curious boy asks an old soldier  
Sitting in front of the grocery store,  
" How did you lose your leg? " 15  
And the old soldier is struck with silence,  
Or his mind flies away  
Because he cannot concentrate it on Gettysburg.  
It comes back jocosely 20  
And he says, " A bear bit it off."  
And the boy wonders, while the old soldier  
Dumbly, feebly, lives over  
The flashes of guns, the thunder of cannon,  
The shrieks of the slain, 25  
And himself lying on the ground,  
And the hospital surgeons, the knives,  
And the long days in bed.  
But if he could describe it all  
He would be an artist. 30  
But if he were an artist there would be deeper wounds  
Which he could not describe.

There is the silence of a great hatred,  
And the silence of a great love,  
And the silence of a deep peace of mind, 35  
And the silence of an embittered friendship.  
There is the silence of a spiritual crisis,  
Through which your soul, exquisitely tortured,  
Comes with visions not to be uttered  
Into a realm of higher life, 40  
And the silence of the gods who understand each other without speech.  
There is the silence of defeat.  
There is the silence of those unjustly punished;  
And the silence of the dying whose hand  
Suddenly grips yours. 45  
There is the silence between father and son,  
When the father cannot explain his life,  
Even though he be misunderstood for it.

There is the silence that comes between husband and wife,  
There is the silence of those who have failed; 50  
And the vast silence that covers  
Broken nations and vanquished leaders.

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| There is the silence of Lincoln,<br>Thinking of the poverty of his youth.<br>And the silence of Napoleon<br>After Waterloo.  | 55       |
| And the silence of Jeanne d'Arc<br>Saying amid the flames, "Blessèd Jesus" —<br>Revealing in two words all sorrow, all hope.<br>And there is the silence of age,<br>Too full of wisdom for the tongue to utter it<br>In words intelligible to those who have not lived<br>The great range of life. | 60       |
| And there is the silence of the dead.<br>If we who are in life cannot speak<br>Of profound experiences,<br>Why do you marvel that the dead<br>Do not tell you of death?<br>Their silence shall be interpreted<br>As we approach them.  | 65<br>70 |

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Which of these persons represent the following things in life: apparent failure, but real success; apparent success, but hidden failure; courage; cowardice; a full and satisfying experience; a meager experience? Which do you admire the most? the least?
2. Under what circumstances did Lincoln say the third line in "Anne Rutledge"? (See page 634.) What is the significance of introducing this quotation here?
3. Can you see any relation between the poems "George Gray" and "El Dorado" (see page 548)?
4. Although the three women have totally different lives, what one point do they all have in common?
5. In "Silence," the poet gives many illustrations of moments of silence. Can you add others? What is meant by lines 31 and 32? What does he say of "the silence of the dead"?

### *For Ambitious Students*

6. Try writing an epitaph for yourself or someone else in the manner of the *Spoon River Anthology*.

7. To get more satisfaction and better understanding out of *Spoon River Anthology* you should read other epitaphs. Some that you would enjoy are: "Dorcas Gustine," the outspoken woman; "Theodore the Poet" and "Petit the Poet," two opposite types who could be made to represent different types of poets in this book; "Jacob Goodpasture," who lost his son in the War between the States; "Hod Putt," who "went into bankruptcy" in an unusual way; "Emily Sparks," the devoted teacher; "Albert Scherding," the failure, whose children were all successful; "Isaiah Beethoven," who had three months to live; "Fiddler Jones," whose fiddling gave him no time to plow; "Griffy the Cooper," who saw us all living in tubs. Perhaps the most impressive one in the book is "Harry Wilmans," whose experience in the Philippine War is the most terrible arraignment against war that one could find.

### CARL SANDBURG (1878- )

If Masters can be said to have immortalized the small towns, another Illinois poet, Carl Sandburg, has shown that poetry can express the spirit of the great ungainly city with its sharp contrasts of beauty and ugliness. Just as the Cambridge poets were fitted at Harvard for their literary careers, so Carl Sandburg was fitted to become the poet laureate of industrialism at the College of Hard Work, where he took courses in being a barbershop porter, a sceneshifter, a truck handler, a potter's apprentice, a hotel dishwasher, a construction worker on a railroad, a harvest hand, a soldier, and a janitor. Incidentally, he did go to a small college in Illinois for a time; but that was not his real education. Naturally his product turned out to be decidedly different from that of Longfellow and Lowell. From the beginning Whitman has been his master as to both freedom of form and that vital facing of life which neither discards nor blinds itself to anything. A comparison of Whitman's "Mannahatta" (see page 553) and Sandburg's "Chicago" shows our two greatest cities, each championed in song like two mighty heroes of ancient days sung by their bards. One can almost imagine the chants intoned to the chords of a crude harp. Sandburg does, indeed, sing to the accompaniment of his guitar many of the folk songs he has collected.

When *Chicago Poems* was published in 1916, it created much violent opposition. Many people felt as Sidney Lanier did about Whitman when he defined the latter's poetry as "huge raw collops slashed from the rump of poetry, and never mind gristle." But as Louis Untermeyer pointed out, we must remember "that Sandburg was only brutal when dealing with

brutality; that beneath his toughness he was one of the tenderest of living poets."

For Sandburg's work as a biographer see page 1043.

## CHICAGO

"Chicago," the title piece in *Chicago Poems*, was first published in *Poetry, a Magazine of Verse*. At that time it won a prize of two hundred dollars as being "the best poem written by a citizen of the United States during the year." It was the foundation stone of Sandburg's fame.

Hog Butcher for the World,  
Toolmaker, Stacker of Wheat,  
Player with Railroads and the Nation's Freight Handler;  
Stormy, husky, brawling,  
City of the Big Shoulders:

5

They tell me you are wicked and I believe them, for I have seen your  
painted women under the gas lamps luring the farmboys.

And they tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have  
seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again.

And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: On the faces of  
women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.

And having answered so I turn once more to those who sneer at this  
my city, and I give them back the sneer and say to them:

Come and show me another city with lifted head singing so proud to  
be alive and coarse and strong and cunning.

10

Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a  
tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;

Fierce as a dog with tongue lapping for action, cunning as a savage  
pitted against the wilderness,

Bareheaded,

Shoveling,

Wrecking,

Planning,

15

Building, breaking, rebuilding.

Under the smoke, dust all over his mouth, laughing with white teeth,

Under the terrible burden of destiny laughing as a young man laughs,

Laughing even as an ignorant fighter laughs who has never lost a  
battle,

20

Bragging and laughing that under his wrist is the pulse, and under his ribs the heart of the people,

Laughing!

Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of Youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Toolmaker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

## BUTTONS

The effect of this, as in so many of Sandburg's poems, lies in a single sharp contrast, the parenthesis startling one like a flash back in a moving picture. The scene is, of course, during the World War, but the poet's mental picture was probably reinforced by memories of his own experiences as a soldier in Porto Rico during the Spanish-American War. This is also from *Chicago Poems*.

I have been watching the war map slammed up for advertising in front of the newspaper office.

Buttons — red and yellow buttons — blue and black buttons — are shoved back and forth across the map.

A laughing young man, sunny with freckles,  
Climbs a ladder, yells a joke to somebody in the crowd,  
And then fixes a yellow button one inch west  
And follows the yellow button with a black button one inch west.  
(Ten thousand men and boys twist on their bodies in a red soak  
along a river edge,  
Gasping of wounds, calling for water, some rattling death in their throats.)  
Who would guess what it cost to move two buttons one inch on the war map here in front of the newspaper office where the freckle-faced young man is laughing to us?

## GRASS

As a companion picture to the preceding poem we have this one — from *Cornhuskers* — showing the healing power of nature over war. Note the unique way in which this is suggested. The five battles mentioned were those involving the greatest loss of human life in the Napoleonic wars, the War between the States, and the World War.

Pile the bodies high at Austerlitz and Waterloo.  
Shovel them under and let me work —  
I am the grass; I cover all.

And pile them high at Gettysburg  
And pile them high at Ypres and Verdun. 5  
Shovel them under and let me work.  
Two years, ten years, and passengers ask the conductor:  
What place is this?  
Where are we now?  
I am the grass. 10  
Let me work.

## A FENCE

The first three lines of this poem suggest only the workingman's resentment of exclusiveness; the last line lifts it into the realm of exquisite imagination. This and the next are more *Chicago Poems*.

Now the stone house on the lake front is finished and the workmen are beginning the fence.  
The palings are made of iron bars with steel points that can stab the life out of any man who falls on them.  
As a fence, it is a masterpiece, and will shut off the rabble and all vagabonds and hungry men and all wandering children looking for a place to play.  
Passing through the bars and over the steel points will go nothing except Death and the Rain and Tomorrow.

## CLEAN CURTAINS

New neighbors came to the corner house at Congress and Green Streets.

The look of their clean white curtains was the same as the rim of a nun's bonnet.

One way was an oyster-pail factory, one way they made candy, one way paper boxes, strawboard cartons.

The warehouse trucks shook the dust of the ways loose and the wheels whirled dust — there was dust of hoof and wagon wheel and rubber tire — dust of police and fire wagons — dust of the winds that circled at midnights and noon listening to no prayers.

“O mother, I know the heart of you,” I sang passing the rim of a nun’s bonnet — O white curtains — and people clean as the prayers of Jesus here in the faded ramshackle at Congress and Green.

Dust and the thundering trucks won — the barrages of the street wheels and the lawless wind took their way — was it five weeks or six the little mother, the new neighbors, battled and then took away the white prayers in the windows?

### WIND SONG

Long ago, I learned to sleep,  
In an old apple orchard where the wind swept by, counting its money  
and throwing it away,  
In a wind-gaunt orchard where the limbs forked out and listened or  
never listened at all,  
In a passel of trees where the branches trapped the wind into whis-  
tling, “Who, who are you?”  
I slept with my head in an elbow on a summer afternoon and there  
I took a sleep lesson. 5  
Then I went away saying: I know why they sleep,  
I know how they trap the tricky winds.  
Long ago I learned how to listen to the singing wind and how to forget  
and how to hear the deep whine,  
Slapping and lapsing under the day blue and the night stars:  
Who, who are you? 10

Who can ever forget  
listening to the wind go by,  
counting its money  
and throwing it away?



## NIGHT STUFF

Listen a while, the moon is a lovely woman,  
a lonely woman, lost in a silver dress,  
lost in a circus rider's silver dress.

Listen a while, the lake by night is a lonely woman,  
a lovely woman, circled with birches and pines,  
mixing their green and white among stars  
shattered in spray clear nights.

I know the moon and lake have twisted the roots under my heart  
the same as a lonely woman, a lovely woman,  
in a silver dress, in a circus rider's silver dress.

## PRAYERS OF STEEL

This poem treats the industrial world with a fervency that is moving. It voices the aspiration of mighty building, of the slender white towers which are rising up everywhere in our great cities. Can you see any implication in it similar to Holmes's "Build thee more stately mansions, O my Soul"?

Lay me on an anvil, O God.  
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.  
Let me pry loose old walls.  
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.  
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.  
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper together.  
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.  
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through blue nights  
into white stars.

## THE PEOPLE, YES

Carl Sandburg's latest volume of poetry, *The People, Yes* (1936), is a unique compilation. It opens with a modern version of the story of the Tower of Babel in the Bible, and the rest of the book is really the babel of voices arising from all parts of our nation and from all conditions of people. The reading of this book gives one somewhat the same sensa-

tions as turning the dial of a radio and hearing different voices come from hither and yon out of the air. The verse is without set form; the units of thought have no names, only numbers; there is no continuity of thought. But the total impression is that one has heard the rich vernacular, the reiterated sayings, the significant phrases, the underlying interpretations — in a word, the composite voice of America.

## 3

In the long flat panhandle of Texas  
 far off on the grassland of the cattle country  
 near noon they sight a rider coming toward them  
 and the sky may be a cold never-changing gray  
 or the sky may be changing its numbers 5  
 back and forth all day even and odd numbers  
 and the afternoon slides away somewhere  
 and they see their rider is alive yet  
 their rider is coming nearer yet  
 and they expect what happens and it happens again 10  
 he and his horse ride in late for supper  
 yet not too late  
 and night is on and the stars are out  
 and night too slides away somewhere  
 night too has even and odd numbers. 15

The wind brings "a norther"  
 to the long flat panhandle  
 and in the shivering cold they say:  
     "Between Amarillo and the North Pole  
     is only a barbwire fence," 20  
 which they give a twist:  
     "Out here the only windbreak  
     is the North Star."

## 50

From what graveyards and sepulchers have they come,  
 these given the public eye and ear  
 who chatter idly of their personal success  
 as though they flowered by themselves alone  
 saying "I," "I," "I," 5  
 crediting themselves with advances and gains,

" I did this, I did that,"  
 and hither and thither, " It was me, Me,"  
 the people, yes, the people, being omitted  
 or being mentioned as incidental 10  
 or failing completely of honorable mention,  
 as though what each did was by him alone  
 and there is a realm of personal achievement  
 wherein he was the boss, the big boy,  
 and it wasn't luck nor the breaks 15  
 nor a convenient public  
 but it was him, " I," " Me,"  
 and the idea and the inference is  
 the pay and the praise should be his —  
 from what graveyards have they strolled 20  
 and do they realize their sepulchral manners  
 and what are the farther backgrounds?

Desecrate the landscape with your billboards, gentlemen,  
 Let no green valleys meet the beholder's eye without  
 Your announcements of gas, oil, beans, soup, whisky, beer, 25  
 Your proclamations of shaving cream, tooth paste, pills, tonics.  
 On the rock and rugged hills, along clear streams and pastures  
 Set up your billboard brag and swagger, your raucous yells.  
 Desecrate the landscape, gentlemen, go to it, hit 'em in the eye.  
 Sell 'em. Make 'em eat it. Sell 'em the name, the idea, the habit. 30  
 If a rock stands proud and grand anywhere sling your signs up on it.

The machine yes the machine  
 never wastes anybody's time  
 never watches the foreman  
 never talks back 35  
 never talks what is right or wrong  
 never listens to others talking or if  
     it does listen it doesn't hear  
 never says we've been thinking, or, our  
     feeling is like this 40  
 the machine yes the machine cuts your production cost  
 a man is a man and what can you do with him?  
 but a machine now you take a machine  
 no kids    no woman    never hungry    never thirsty  
 all a machine needs is a little regular attention and plenty of grease. 45

## 51

The copperfaces, the red men, handed us tobacco,  
 the weed for the pipe of friendship,  
 also the bah-tah-to, the potato, the spud.  
 Sunflowers came from Peruvians in ponchos.  
 Early Italians taught us of chestnuts, 5  
 walnuts and peaches being Persian mementos,  
 Siberians finding for us what rye might do,  
 Hindus coming through with cucumber,  
 Egyptians giving us the onion, the pea,  
 Arabians handing advice with one gift: 10  
 "Some like it, some say it's just spinach."  
     To the Chinese we have given  
     kerosene, bullets, Bibles  
     and they have given us radishes, soy beans, silk,  
     poems, paintings, proverbs, porcelain, egg foo yong, 15  
     gunpowder, Fourth of July firecrackers, fireworks,  
     and labor gangs for the first Pacific railways.  
     Now we may thank these people  
     or reserve our thanks  
     and speak of them as outsiders 20  
     and imply the request,  
     "Would you just as soon get off the earth?"  
     holding ourselves aloof in pride of distinction  
     saying to ourselves this costs us nothing  
     as though hate has no cost 25  
     as though hate ever grew anything worth growing.  
     Yes we may say this trash is beneath our notice  
     or we may hold them in respect and affection  
     as fellow creepers on a commodious planet  
     saying, "Yes you too you too are people." 30

## 59

The transient tar-paper shack  
 comes from the hands of the people.  
 So does the floodlighted  
 steel-and-concrete skyscraper.  
     The rough-lumber two-room houseboat 5

is from the hands of the people.  
 So is the turbine-driven steamboat  
 with ballroom, orchestra, swimming pool,  
 the fat of the land,  
 moving in the mid-Atlantic ocean.

10

Every day the people of the city haul it away, take it apart, and put it together again.

Every day around the globe and its atmospheric fringe the people of the earth live the unwritten saga of one day.

Today the fishing boats go out and little men shade their eyes and study the treacherous, rolling, freehanded sea.

Today the steel-and-aluminum streamlined passenger train cuts through a blizzard, the transcontinental planes are hung up, and a liner at sea sends a distress wireless.

Today strikes break out where strikes were never heard of before, the lumber trade stands in fear of steel-fabricated houses, and farming in Somaliland is a hazard.

15

Every hour thousands of six-decker novels lived, every minute millions of long and short stories.

Today homes are lost, farms won, cars traded in, old furniture lacquered, pigs littered, an albatross shot, pearls lost in Vienna found in a fish can in Omaha.

Today jobs landed and lost, contracts signed and broken, families scattered and joined, girls after long waiting saying Yes to men No to men.

The books of man have begun only a short stammering memorandum of the toil, resources and stamina of man,

Of the required errands, the dramatic impulses, the irresistible songs of this given moment, this eyeblink now.

20

Every day the people of the city haul it away, take it apart, and put it together again.

The how and the why of the people so doing is the saga not yet written.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what ways do you find Sandburg's poems like Whitman's? In what ways different? Compare their treatment of grass (see Whitman's "Song of Myself," page 555).

2. Point out all the poems in this group in which Sandburg makes use of striking contrast.

3. In which poems has he used a common object as a symbol of some deeper truth of life?

4. Where do you find examples of his "brutal" use of language? Where of delicacy of language?

5. On the whole, does Sandburg seem to be more concerned with giving us external pictures of industrial life or interpretations of its underlying significance?

6. In the selections from *The People, Yes* point out examples of humorous exaggeration, irony, modern slang, the folly of race prejudice, the complexity of American life. How many things can you find mentioned that played little or no part in life a century ago? Do you think a young writer would find encouragement or discouragement in reading 59? Give reasons for your answer.

### *For Ambitious Students*

7. Sandburg is the great poet of industrial life. By reading in his volumes *Chicago*; *Smoke and Steel*; *Good Morning, America*; and *The People, Yes* collect what you consider his most significant poems on this general subject. Discuss them and read some of the best to the class. Since modern art is also concerned with this subject, a set of illustrations to accompany your collection would add greatly to it. If you are interested in photography and live in a large city, you have opportunity for some fine illustrative shots.

8. Let a group of students interested in folk music prepare a program from the material in Sandburg's *The American Songbag*. Part of it might be a radio effect with different unidentified speaking voices contributing parts of *The People, Yes*. Choral reading of passages from the latter would also add to a program.

9. If you have had an opportunity to hear over the radio *A Ballad for Americans* by John La Touche and Earl Robinson, compare its method of using different voice rhythms to interpret a nation with Sandburg's method in *The People, Yes*.

### VACHEL LINDSAY (1879-1931)

(Nicholas) Vachel Lindsay was our modern American troubadour. He believed that poetry is made not for the eye, but for the ear; and he spent some of his life journeying up and down the land singing his songs, much as did the ballad singers in the days of knights and feudal castles. Sometimes he made dignified tours from city to city or college to college, appearing quite properly on lecture platform or at college chapel. But he

sometimes threw convention to the winds, and set off boldly afoot across country with nothing to pay his way except his little pamphlet, *Rhymes to Be Traded for Bread*. Because Lindsay was essentially a singer, his poems must be chanted aloud in the Lindsay manner, or much of their appeal is lost. To help the reader, in many of his longer poems the poet printed directions for reading by the side of his verses.

After graduating from high school in Springfield, Illinois, Vachel Lindsay attended Hiram College and art schools in Chicago and New York. Shortly he was back in his home town, preaching his gospel of beauty through an attempted Ruskin revival, and campaigning against civic unrighteousness and ugliness in his privately printed weekly *War Bulletin*. "Ugliness," he said, "is a kind of misgovernment." He continued ever after to be a John the Baptist preaching to a materialistic and cynical age the Americanism of Walt Whitman and the beauty and art of Edgar Allan Poe.

Lindsay wrote many delightful rhymes for children. He developed "poem games" to which children dance, needing no other instrument to beat the rhythm except the human voice. He sang songs about movie stars, and wrote one whole prose volume on *The Art of the Motion Picture*. He brought forth a Southern challenge to the New Englanders in his "The Virginians Are Coming Again." He set to word music the lives of picturesque and vivid Americans — Old Andrew Jackson, William Jennings Bryan, John Brown, Johnny Appleseed, Alexander Campbell. But his poetry is too various to be divided into neat little pigeonholes. The best of it has given him an international reputation as the modern American minstrel. All the poems given below will be found in his *Collected Poems*.

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN WALKS AT MIDNIGHT

(IN SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS)

All three of the group of contemporary Illinois poets have written about Abraham Lincoln in some form. Lindsay felt an especially close bond because he was brought up in Springfield, Lincoln's home town, and the Lincoln family was close to his own family traditions. The following poem, written during the World War, has become one of the most familiar of the many poems of that day. Since an assured peace has not yet come to the world, it still has its significant message.

It is portentous, and a thing of state  
That here at midnight, in our little town  
A mourning figure walks, and will not rest,  
Near the old courthouse pacing up and down,

Or by his homestead, or in shadowed yards                 5  
He lingers where his children used to play,  
Or through the market, on the well-worn stones  
He stalks until the dawn stars burn away.

A bronzed, lank man! His suit of ancient black,  
A famous high top hat and plain worn shawl  
Make him the quaint great figure that men love,  
The prairie lawyer, master of us all.

He cannot sleep upon his hillside now.  
He is among us: — as in times before!  
And we who toss and lie awake for long  
Breathe deep, and start, to see him pass the door.

His head is bowed. He thinks on men and kings.  
Yea, when the sick world cries, how can he sleep?  
Too many peasants fight, they know not why,  
Too many homesteads in black terror weep.

The sins of all the war lords burn his heart.  
He sees the dreadnaughts scouring every main.  
He carries on his shawl-wrapped shoulders now  
The bitterness, the folly and the pain.

He cannot rest until a spirit dawn  
Shall come; — the shining hope of Europe free:  
The league of sober folk, the workers' earth,  
Bringing long peace to Cornland, Alp and Sea.

It breaks his heart that kings must murder still,  
That all his hours of travail here for men  
Seem yet in vain. And who will bring white peace  
That he may sleep upon his hill again?

# ON THE BUILDING OF SPRINGFIELD

Lindsay hoped profoundly that in its development his own town of Springfield would heed the call of beauty and satisfy the needs of the intellect and the spirit. His reiterated preachments against mere materialism



were given scant attention by his fellow townsmen during his lifetime. In recent years, however, Springfield has awakened to its possibilities as a national shrine because of its association with Lincoln's life, and great projects for beautifying the town have been completed. In July, 1935, a large artificial lake just outside the town was formally dedicated. The beautiful many-arched bridge which spans it was officially named the Vachel Lindsay Bridge. At one end of it stands a bust of the poet, who thus eventually received the recognition that his home town so long withheld from him.

Let not our town be large, remembering  
 That little Athens was the Muses' home;  
 That Oxford rules the heart of London still,  
 That Florence gave the Renaissance to Rome.

Record it for the grandson of your son — 5  
 A city is not builded in a day:  
 Our little town cannot complete her soul  
 Till countless generations pass away.

Now let each child be joined as to a church  
 To her perpetual hopes, each man ordained; 10  
 Let every street be made a reverent aisle  
 Where Music grows, and Beauty is unchained.

Let Science and Machinery and Trade  
 Be slaves of her, and make her all in all —  
 Building against our blatant restless time 15  
 An unseen, skillful, medieval wall.

Let every citizen be rich toward God.  
 Let Christ the beggar, teach divinity —  
 Let no man rule who holds his money dear.  
 Let this, our city, be our luxury. 20

We should build parks that students from afar  
 Would choose to starve in, rather than go home,  
 Fair little squares, with Phidian ornament,  
 Food for the spirit, milk and honeycomb.

23. **Phidian**: Phidias was the greatest of the ancient Greek sculptors.

Songs shall be sung by us in that *good* day — 25  
 Songs we have written — blood within the rhyme  
 Beating, as when old England still was glad,  
 The purple, rich, Elizabethan time.

Say, is my prophecy too fair and far?  
 I only know, unless her faith be high, 30  
 The soul of this our Nineveh is doomed,  
 Our little Babylon will surely die.

Some city on the breast of Illinois  
 No wiser and no better at the start,  
 By faith shall rise redeemed, by faith shall rise 35  
 Bearing the Western glory in her heart.

The genius of the Maple, Elm and Oak,  
 The secret hidden in each grain of corn,  
 The glory that the prairie angels sing  
 At night when sons of Life and Love are born, 40

Born but to struggle, squalid and alone,  
 Broken and wandering in their early years.  
 When will they make our dusty streets their goal,  
 Within our attics hide their sacred tears?

When will they start our vulgar blood athrill 45  
 With living language — words that set us free?  
 When will they make a path of beauty clear  
 Between our riches and our liberty?

We must have many Lincoln-hearted men.  
 A city is not builded in a day. 50  
 And they must do their work, and come and go  
 While countless generations pass away.

28. **Elizabethan**: pertaining to the reign of Queen Elizabeth of England in the late sixteenth century, when poetry and drama were especially flourishing. 31. **Nineveh**: capital of ancient Assyria, which finally fell before the conquering Persians. 32. **Babylon**: capital of Babylonia, which suffered a fate similar to that of Nineveh.

# GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH ENTERS INTO HEAVEN

This astonishing poem, picturing General Booth, head of the Salvation Army, marching into heaven followed by his converts is an excellent example of Lindsay's use of sound effects. The steady roll of the drum, the blatancy of the trumpets, the uneven tramping of the riffraff, with the motif of the hymn tune running through all, combine to make an unforgettable sound-experience comparable to that produced in music by Stravinsky and other modern composers. When this poem was first published, some thought Lindsay was trying to ridicule the Salvation Army; but he himself explained that he meant it as a genuine tribute to the work of the great "General." The idea for the poem came to him during one of his troubadour journeys about the country selling rhymes for bread. One night when the rhymes had failed to produce enough for a lodging, he was about to sleep on the steps of a post office when he was invited to the Salvation Army quarters for the night. His experience with the organization gave him great respect for its service to humanity.

[To be sung to the tune of "The Blood of the Lamb"  
with indicated instrument]

## I

[*Bass drum beaten loudly*]

Booth led boldly with his big bass drum —  
 (Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)  
 The Saints smiled gravely and they said, "He's come."  
 (Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)  
 Walking lepers followed, rank on rank, 5  
 Lurching braves from the ditches dank,  
 Drabs from the alleyways and drug fiends pale —  
 Minds still passion-ridden, soul powers frail: —  
 Vermin-eaten saints with moldy breath,  
 Unwashed legions with the ways of Death — 10  
 (Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

[*Banjoes*]

Every slum had sent its half a score  
 The round world over. (Booth had groaned for more.)  
 Every banner that the wide world flies  
 Bloomed with glory and transcendent dyes. 15

Big-voiced lasses made their banjos bang,  
 Tranced, fanatical, they shrieked and sang: —  
 “ Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb? ”  
 Hallelujah! It was queer to see  
 Bull-necked convicts with that land make free. 20  
 Loons with trumpets blew a blare, blare, blare  
 On, on upward thro’ the golden air!  
 (Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)

## II

[*Bass drum slower and softer*]

Booth died blind and still by Faith he trod,  
 Eyes still dazzled by the ways of God. 25  
 Booth led boldly, and he looked the chief  
 Eagle countenance in sharp relief,  
 Beard a-flying, air of high command  
 Unabated in that holy land.

[*Sweet flute music*]

Jesus came from out the courthouse door, 30  
 Stretched his hands above the passing poor.  
 Booth saw not, but led his queer ones there  
 Round and round the mighty courthouse square.  
 Yet in an instant all that blear review  
 Marched on spotless, clad in raiment new. 35  
 The lame were straightened, withered limbs uncurled  
 And blind eyes opened on a new, sweet world.

[*Bass drum louder*]

Drabs and vixens in a flash made whole!  
 Gone was the weasel head, the snout, the jowl!  
 Sages and sibyls now, and athletes clean, 40  
 Rulers of empires, and of forests green!

[*Grand chorus of all instruments. Tambourines to the foreground*]

The hosts were sandaled, and their wings were fire!  
 (Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?)  
 But their noise played havoc with the angel choir.  
 (Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?) 45

O, shout Salvation! It was good to see  
 Kings and princes by the Lamb set free.  
 The banjos rattled and the tambourines  
 Jing-jing-jingled in the hands of queens.

[*Reverently sung, no instruments*]

And when Booth halted by the curb for prayer 50  
 He saw his Master thro' the flag-filled air.  
 Christ came gently with a robe and crown  
 For Booth the soldier, while the throng knelt down.  
 He saw King Jesus. They were face to face,  
 And he knelt a-weeping in that holy place. 55  
 Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?

## THE SANTA FE TRAIL

### A HUMORESQUE

One of Lindsay's prose books is called *Adventures While Preaching the Gospel of Beauty*. It relates his experience while tramping across country from Springfield, Illinois, to the Southwest by way of Kansas. "The Santa Fe Trail" is a souvenir of that trip. The poet-tramp sits on a milestone by the side of the road while, in the form of cars labeled with the city pennants popular around 1912, "the United States goes by."

This time Lindsay gives the reader full directions. If you follow them, this poem will bring to the class a whole day of color and sound, beginning with sunrise and the first faint horn in the east, moving on through screaming cars and freight trains, and ending with the evening whispers of the prairie fairies hidden in the corn and grass. It is a poem of sharp contrasts and demands oral rendition, utilizing the full range of the voice.

*I asked the old Negro, "What is that bird that sings so well?" He answered, "That is the Rachel-Jane." "Hasn't it another name — lark, or thrush, or the like?" "No. Jus' Rachel-Jane."*

### I. IN WHICH A RACING AUTO COMES FROM THE EAST

This is the order of the music of the morning: —  
 First, from the far East comes but a crooning.  
 The crooning turns to a sunrise singing.  
 Hark to the *calm-horn, balm-horn, psalm-horn*.  
 Hark to the *faint-horn, quaint-horn, saint-* 5  
*horn. . . .*

*To be sung  
 delicately, to an  
 improvised tune.*

Hark to the *pace-horn, chase-horn, race-horn*.  
 And the holy veil of the dawn has gone.  
 Swiftly the brazen car comes on.  
 It burns in the east as the sunrise burns.  
 I see great flashes where the far trail turns. 10  
 Its eyes are lamps like the eyes of dragons.  
 It drinks gasoline from big red flagons.  
 Butting through the delicate mists of the morning,  
 It comes like lightning, goes past roaring.  
 It will hail all the windmills, taunting, ringing, 15  
 Dodge the cyclones,  
 Count the milestones,  
 On through the ranges the prairie dog tills —  
 Scooting past the cattle on the thousand hills. . . .  
 Ho for the tear-horn, scare-horn, dare-horn, 20  
 Ho for the *gay-horn, bark-horn, bay-horn*.  
*Ho for Kansas, land that restores us*  
*When houses choke us, and great books bore us!*  
*Sunrise Kansas, harvester's Kansas,*  
*A million men have found you before us. 25*  
*A million men have found you before us.*

*To be sung or read  
 with great speed.*

*To be read or sung  
 in a rolling bass,  
 with some  
 deliberation.*

## II. IN WHICH MANY AUTOS PASS WESTWARD

I want live things in their pride to remain.  
 I will not kill one grasshopper vain  
 Though he eats a hole in my shirt like a door.  
 I let him out, give him one chance more. 30  
 Perhaps, while he gnaws my hat in his whim,  
 Grasshopper lyrics occur to him.

I am a tramp by the long trail's border,  
 Given to squalor, rags and disorder.  
 I nap and amble and yawn and look, 35  
 Write fool thoughts in my grubby book,  
 Recite to the children, explore at my ease,  
 Work when I work, beg when I please,  
 Give crank drawings, that make folks stare  
 To the half-grown boys in the sunset glare, 40  
 And get me a place to sleep in the hay  
 At the end of a live-and-let-live day.

*In an even, deliber-  
 ate, narrative man-  
 ner.*

I find in the stubble of the new-cut weeds  
 A whisper and a feasting, all one needs:  
 The whisper of the strawberries, white and red 45  
 Here where the new-cut weeds lie dead.

But I would not walk all alone till I die  
 Without some life-drunk horns going by.  
 Up round this apple earth they come  
 Blasting the whispers of the morning dumb: — 50  
 Cars in a plain realistic row.  
 And fair dreams fade  
 When the raw horns blow.

On each snapping pennant  
 A big black name: — 55  
 The careering city  
 Whence each car came.  
 They tour from Memphis, Atlanta, Savannah,  
 Tallahassee and Texarkana.  
 They tour from St. Louis, Columbus, Manistee, 60  
 They tour from Peoria, Davenport, Kankakee.  
 Cars from Concord, Niagara, Boston,  
 Cars from Topeka, Emporia, and Austin.  
 Cars from Chicago, Hannibal, Cairo.  
 Cars from Alton, Oswego, Toledo. 65  
 Cars from Buffalo, Kokomo, Delphi,  
 Cars from Lodi, Carmi, Loami.  
 Ho for Kansas, land that restores us  
 When houses choke us, and great books bore us!  
 While I watch the highroad 70  
 And look at the sky,  
 While I watch the clouds in amazing grandeur  
 Roll their legions without rain  
 Over the blistering Kansas plain —  
 While I sit by the milestone 75  
 And watch the sky,  
 The United States  
 Goes by.

Listen to the iron-horns, ripping, racking.  
 Listen to the quack-horns, slack and clacking. 80  
 Way down the road, trilling like a toad,

*Like a train caller in  
 a union depot.*

*To be given very  
 harshly, with a  
 snapping explo-  
 siveness.*

Here comes the *dice*-horn, here comes the *vice*-horn,  
 Here comes the *snarl*-horn, *brawl*-horn, *lewd*-horn,  
 Followed by the *prude*-horn, bleak and squeak-  
 ing: —

(Some of them from Kansas, some of them 85  
 from Kansas.)

Here comes the *hod*-horn, *plod*-horn, *sod*-horn,  
 Nevermore-to-*roam*-horn, *loam*-horn, *home*-horn.

(Some of them from Kansas, some of them from  
 Kansas.)

Far away the Rachel-Jane  
 Not defeated by the horns 90  
 Sings amid a hedge of thorns: —

*To be read or sung  
 well-nigh in a  
 whisper.*

“Love and life,  
 Eternal youth —  
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet,  
 Dew and glory, 95  
 Love and truth,  
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.”

*Louder and louder,  
 faster and faster.*

WHILE SMOKE-BLACK FREIGHTS ON THE DOUBLE-  
 TRACKED RAILROAD,

DRIVEN AS THOUGH BY THE FOUL FIEND'S OXGOAD,  
 SCREAMING TO THE WEST COAST, SCREAMING 100  
 TO THE EAST,

CARRY OFF A HARVEST, BRING BACK A FEAST,  
 HARVESTING MACHINERY AND HARNESS FOR THE  
 BEAST.

THE HAND CARS WHIZ, AND RATTLE ON THE RAILS,  
 THE SUNLIGHT FLASHES ON THE TIN DINNER PAILS.

And then in an instant, 105  
 Ye modern men,

*In a rolling bass,  
 with increasing  
 deliberation.*

Behold the procession once again,

The United States goes by.

Listen to the iron-horns, ripping, racking,

Listen to the *wise*-horn, desperate-to-*advise* 110  
 horn,

*With a snapping  
 explosiveness.*

Listen to the *fast*-horn, *kill*-horn, *blast*-horn. . . .

Far away the Rachel-Jane  
 Not defeated by the horns  
 Sings amid a hedge of thorns: —

*To be sung or read  
 well-nigh in a  
 whisper.*

“Love and life, 115



- Eternal youth,  
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet,  
 Dew and glory,  
 Love and truth.  
 Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet." 120
- The mufflers open on a score of cars  
 With wonderful thunder,  
 CRACK, CRACK, CRACK,  
 CRACK-CRACK, CRACK-CRACK,  
 CRACK, CRACK, CRACK, 125  
 Listen to the gold-horn . . .  
 Old-horn . . .  
 Cold-horn . . .  
 And all of the tunes, till the night comes down  
 On haystack, and anthill, and wind-bitten 130  
 town.  
 Then far in the west, as in the beginning,  
 Dim in the distance, sweet in retreating,  
 Hark to the faint-horn, quaint-horn, saint-horn,  
 Hark to the calm-horn, balm-horn, psalm-  
 horn. . . .
- They are hunting the goals that they under- 135  
 stand: —  
 San Francisco and the brown sea sand.  
 My goal is the mystery the beggars win.  
 I am caught in the web the night winds spin.  
 The edge of the wheat ridge speaks to me.  
 I talk with the leaves of the mulberry tree. 140  
 And now I hear, as I sit all alone  
 In the dusk, by another big Santa Fe stone,  
 The souls of the tall corn gathering round  
 And the gay little souls of the grass in the ground.  
 Listen to the tale the cottonwood tells. 145  
 Listen to the windmills, singing o'er the wells.  
 Listen to the whistling flutes without price  
 Of myriad prophets out of paradise.  
 Harken to the wonder  
 That the night air carries. . . . 150  
 Listen . . . to . . . the . . . whisper . . .  
 Of . . . the . . . prairie . . . fairies
- To be brawled in the beginning with a snapping explosive-ness, ending in a languorous chant.*
- To be sung to exactly the same whispered tune as the first five lines.*
- This section beginning sonorously, ending in a languorous whisper.*

Singing o'er the fairy plain: —

"Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet.

Love and glory,

Stars and rain,

Sweet, sweet, sweet, sweet. . . ."

155

*To the same  
whispered tune as  
the Rachel-Jane  
song — but very  
slowly.*

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In "Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight" how many of the causes for his unrest still exist in the world? Give specific instances. What other legends have you heard of great leaders returning to earth in spirit form when their work was unfinished?

2. Why does Lindsay think it is not necessary for a town to be large in order to be important in its influence? Can you name other comparatively small towns in this country which have attained national reputation or influence through some field of intellectual interest or some special beauty?

3. Make a list of the things Lindsay would like to have in Springfield. Comment on this list. Would you add or omit any points for your ideal town? How many things on this list are to be found in your town? What does this poem suggest to you as possible improvements for your town?

4. In both "General William Booth" and "The Santa Fe Trail" study the sound effects. In which passages do you think Lindsay has been particularly clever in suiting the words to the sound effect desired? Where do you find definite onomatopoeic words; that is, words whose meaning is dependent on their sound? How does the effect produced compare with that in Poe's "The Bells" (see page 537), also notable for its onomatopoeia?

5. Since the effect of these poems can be obtained only by oral reading, practice reading them aloud, forgetting yourself completely in the swing and mood of the different parts. Don't be afraid to exaggerate; the poet himself did in his own readings, for which he was famous.

6. How do both these poems reflect experiences in the author's life? What attitude toward human beings do you find in both poems? Where do you find suggestions that he was interested in pictorial as well as musical art?

7. What other poets have you found in this book who appreciated the rhythmic qualities of place names? Give examples. Select some place names you know that have rhythmic possibilities for a poem. How many of the places mentioned in "The Santa Fe Trail" could you locate on a map?

8. What is the meaning of the "Rachel-Jane's" message? Is there anything in "General William Booth" that affords a like contrast to the main tone of the poem?

*For Your Vocabulary*

9. Have you ever noticed how words that describe sounds often sound, themselves, like what they mean? Here the poet speaks of the *blatant* modern times (page 652), using a word coined from the sheep's bleating. A *blatant* sound is strong on noise and weak on meaning. Do you ever hear *blatant* talk? A little later you will find another poet describing the rook's cry as *raucous* (page 674). Even if you had never heard a rook, you could guess from the sound of the word that its cry is harsh and unmusical.

*For Ambitious Students*

10. No better examples can be found for effective choral reading than the poems of Lindsay. They have unusual variation of sound effects and build up to dramatic climaxes. Besides, he has given the reading directions himself. These, however, are more difficult for an entire class than Poe's "The Bells," with its straight succession of four increasing and deepening tones. Here there is more intricate orchestration. It might be well for a small interested group to practice separately on the main part of the poems, letting the class as a whole come in only on the grand chorus of "General William Booth" or on certain climactic lines of "The Santa Fe Trail" (such as 25-26, 77-78, 98-104, 123-25). In the latter poem there is wonderful opportunity for contrast in single voices in the names of the cities (58-67) and the different horns (4-5, 82-87, 109-11); and, of course, the Rachel-Jane should be a single high, sweet voice.

## JAMES WELDON JOHNSON (1871-1938)

An unusually varied career marked the life of James Weldon Johnson. He was born in Jacksonville, Florida. After receiving his Master's degree from Atlanta University, he was principal of a high school, studied and practiced law, collaborated with his brother in writing light opera, spent seven years in Venezuela and Nicaragua as United States Consul, and translated a Spanish grand opera, *Goyescas*, which was produced at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York. From 1916 to 1930 he was secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. After 1915 he gave his time largely to writing and to lecturing at Fisk University, New York University, and others on creative writing. His collections of Negro poetry and Negro spirituals were influential in arousing public appreciation of these rich veins of literature. Among his own writings *God's Trombones* (1927), from which the following poem is taken, has always made an especial appeal. Supposedly a series of seven Negro

sermons in verse, these poems are deeply imbued with the vigorous rhythm and colorful imagery which give Negro literature its distinctive quality. *Black Manhattan* followed in 1930, and in 1933 his autobiography *Along This Way*, a significant picture of modern life.

## THE CREATION

(A NEGRO SERMON)

And God stepped out on space,  
And He looked around and said,  
“ *I’m lonely —*  
*I’ll make me a world.*”

And far as the eye of God could see 5  
Darkness covered everything,  
Blacker than a hundred midnights  
Down in a cypress swamp.

Then God smiled,  
And the light broke, 10  
And the darkness rolled up on one side,  
And the light stood shining on the other,  
And God said, “ *That’s good!* ”

Then God reached out and took the light in His hands,  
And God rolled the light around in His hands, 15  
Until He made the sun;  
And He set that sun a-blazing in the heavens.  
And the light that was left from making the sun  
God gathered up in a shining ball  
And flung against the darkness, 20  
Spangling the night with the moon and stars.  
Then down between  
The darkness and the light  
He hurled the world;  
And God said, “ *That’s good!* ” 25

Then God himself stepped down —  
And the sun was on His right hand,  
And the moon was on His left;  
The stars were clustered about His head,

And the earth was under His feet. 30  
And God walked, and where He trod  
His footsteps hollowed the valleys out  
And bulged the mountains up.

Then He stopped and looked and saw  
That the earth was hot and barren. 35  
So God stepped over to the edge of the world  
And He spat out the seven seas;  
He batted His eyes and the lightnings flashed;  
He clapped His hands and the thunders rolled;  
And the waters above the earth came down, 40  
The cooling waters came down.

Then the green grass sprouted,  
And the little red flowers blossomed,  
The pine-tree pointed his finger to the sky,  
And the oak spread out his arms; 45  
The lakes cuddled down in the hollows of the ground,  
And the rivers ran down to the sea;  
And God smiled again,  
And the rainbow appeared,  
And curled itself around His shoulder. 50

Then God raised His arm and He waved His hand  
Over the sea and over the land,  
And He said, "*Bring forth! Bring forth!*"  
And quicker than God could drop His hand,  
Fishes and fowls 55  
And beasts and birds  
Swam the rivers and the seas,  
Roamed the forests and the woods,  
And split the air with their wings,  
And God said, "*That's good!*" 60

Then God walked around  
And God looked around  
On all that He had made.  
He looked at His sun,  
And He looked at His moon, 65  
And He looked at His little stars;

He looked on His world  
 With all its living things,  
 And God said, "*I'm lonely still.*"

Then God sat down 70  
 On the side of a hill where He could think;  
 By a deep, wide river He sat down;  
 With His head in His hands,  
 God thought and thought,  
 Till He thought, "*I'll make me a man!*" 75

Up from the bed of the river  
 God scooped the clay;  
 And by the bank of the river  
 He kneeled Him down;  
 And there the great God Almighty, 80  
 Who lit the sun and fixed it in the sky,  
 Who flung the stars to the most far corner of the night,  
 Who rounded the earth in the middle of His hand —  
 This Great God,  
 Like a mammy bending over her baby, 85  
 Kneeled down in the dust  
 Toiling over a lump of clay  
 Till He shaped it in His own image;  
 Then into it He blew the breath of life,  
 And man became a living soul. 90  
 Amen. Amen.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Pick out words and phrases which give an especially poetic quality to the story of creation. Compare this with the first chapter of Genesis to find likenesses and differences.

2. By what means does the poet give God a marked personality? If you have read or have seen the play *Green Pastures*, compare the picturing of God and the universe in the two pieces of literature.

3. What essential differences in form and purpose do you see between this "sermon" and a spiritual? Would the sermon lend itself to a musical setting? If so, how would the music itself have to differ from that of the spiritual?

4. Do you see any resemblance between the poetry of Johnson and that of Lindsay? If so, what?

## SARA TEASDALE (1884-1933)

As with Emily Dickinson, the chronicle of outward actions in the life of Sara Teasdale is of little importance compared with the inner action of thought and imagination. That she was born and educated in St. Louis, Missouri, traveled extensively, and later lived in New York City becomes a matter of interest only in the sense of pinning down a lovely butterfly and identifying it with scientific tags. Her best volumes are *Love Songs* (1917), *Flame and Shadow* (1920), *Country House* (1932), and *Strange Victory* (1933). *Stars Tonight* is a collection for boys and girls. All her volumes are filled with delicate bits like the following samples — elusive little flashes of emotion caught and molded for us like tiny figures in ivory. They are little coins for the memory such as she here describes.

## THE COIN

Into my heart's treasury  
I slipped a coin  
That time cannot take  
Nor a thief purloin, —  
Oh, better than the minting  
Of a gold-crowned king  
Is the safe-kept memory  
Of a lovely thing.

## THE LAMP

If I can bear your love like a lamp before me,  
When I go down the long steep Road of Darkness,  
I shall not fear the everlasting shadows,  
Nor cry in terror.

If I can find out God, then I shall find Him,  
If none can find Him, then I shall sleep soundly,  
Knowing how well on earth your love sufficed me,  
A lamp in darkness.

## NIGHT SONG AT AMALFI

I asked the heaven of stars  
What I should give my love —  
It answered me with silence,  
Silence above.

I asked the darkened sea  
 Down where the fishermen go —  
 It answered me with silence,  
 Silence below.

5

Oh, I could give him weeping,  
 Or I could give him song —  
 But how can I give silence  
 My whole life long?

10

## THE LONG HILL

I must have passed the crest a while ago  
 And now I am going down —  
 Strange to have crossed the crest and not to know,  
 But the brambles were always catching the hem of my gown.

All the morning I thought how proud I should be  
 To stand there straight as a queen,  
 Wrapped in the wind and the sun with the world under me —  
 But the air was dull; there was little I could have seen.

5

It was nearly level along the beaten track  
 And the brambles caught in my gown —  
 But it's no use now to think of turning back,  
 The rest of the way will be only going down.

10

## LEAVES

One by one, like leaves from a tree,  
 All my faiths have forsaken me;  
 But the stars above my head  
 Burn in white and delicate red,  
 And beneath my feet the earth  
 Brings the sturdy grass to birth.  
 I who was content to be  
 But a silken-singing tree,  
 But a rustle of delight  
 In the wistful heart of night —

5

10



I have lost the leaves that knew  
 Touch of rain and weight of dew.  
 Blinded by a leafy crown  
 I looked neither up nor down —  
 But the leaves that fall and die 15  
 Have left me room to see the sky;  
 Now for the first time I know  
 Stars above and earth below.

## BARTER

Life has loveliness to sell —  
 All beautiful and splendid things,  
 Blue waves whitened on a cliff,  
 Climbing fire that sways and sings,  
 And children's faces looking up 5  
 Holding wonder like a cup.

Life has loveliness to sell —  
 Music like a curve of gold,  
 Scent of pine trees in the rain,  
 Eyes that love you, arms that hold, 10  
 And for your spirit's still delight,  
 Holy thoughts that star the night.

Spend all you have for loveliness,  
 Buy it and never count the cost,  
 For one white singing hour of peace 15  
 Count many a year of strife well lost,  
 And for a breath of ecstasy  
 Give all you have been or could be.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. An undercurrent of sadness and wistfulness runs through many of Sara Teasdale's poems. Where do you find it here?
2. What situations can you imagine calling forth the feelings expressed in these poems?
3. Observe that "The Lamp," though a lyric, has no rhyme. How do you think this affects the mood of the poem?
4. What application of "The Long Hill" can you make to the life of a human being?
5. How do you interpret "Night Song at Amalfi" and "Leaves"?

## ELINOR WYLIE (1886-1928)

Elinor Wylie (Mrs. William Rose Benét) was almost as distinguished a writer of prose as of verse, but she was primarily thought of as a poet. Her first volume, *Nets to Catch the Wind* (1921), established her reputation, and her three succeeding volumes more than bore out the promise of the first. The four volumes are now published together as *Collected Poems*. Within the short span of five years, when she was producing her last three volumes of poems, she also wrote three outstanding novels. *Jennifer Lorn* (1923), *The Venetian Glass Nephew* (1925), and *The Orphan Angel* (1926). This last novel pictures certain imaginary passages in the life of Shelley, a poet who had profoundly influenced her; and, like Shelley, she possessed the greatest delicacy and sensitiveness to beauty. Her work is always highly finished technically and yet deeply emotional as well as personal. She seems to be groping for some means of escape from the heavy problems of existence, as is apparent in the poem "Escape," which suggests both the gay agility of her mind and the elusiveness of much of her poetry. The meaning is lying there just under the surface, but often neatly hidden from the prosaic mind. "Sea Lullaby" has the quality of saturnine cruelty that nature sometimes manifests. The "Non-sense Rhyme" is quite the opposite of its title. "Velvet Shoes" and "Pretty Words" show the artist's highly developed senses of touch and hearing as well as of sight. Elinor Wylie is truly an artist of great individuality.

## ESCAPE

When foxes eat the last gold grape,  
And the last white antelope is killed,  
I shall stop fighting and escape  
Into a little house I'll build.

But first I'll shrink to fairy size,  
With a whisper no one understands,  
Making blind moons of all your eyes,  
And muddy roads of all your hands.

5

And you may grope for me in vain  
In hollows under the mangrove root,  
Or where, in apple-scented rain,  
The silver wasp nests hang like fruit.

10

## SEA LULLABY

The old moon is tarnished  
With smoke of the flood,  
The dead leaves are varnished  
With color like blood,

A treacherous smiler  
With teeth white as milk,  
A savage beguiler  
In sheathings of silk, 5

The sea creeps to pillage,  
She leaps on her prey; 10  
A child of the village  
Was murdered today.

She came up to meet him  
In a smooth golden cloak,  
She choked him and beat him 15  
To death, for a joke.

Her bright locks were tangled,  
She shouted for joy,  
With one hand she strangled  
A strong little boy. 20

Now in silence she lingers  
Beside him all night  
To wash her long fingers  
In silvery light.

## NONSENSE RHYME

Whatever's good or bad or both  
Is surely better than the none;  
There's grace in either love or loathe;  
Sunlight, or freckles on the sun.

# ELINOR WYLIE

671

The worst and best are both inclined  
To snap like vixens at the truth;  
But, O, beware the middle mind  
That purrs and never shows a tooth!

5

Beware the smooth ambiguous smile  
That never pulls the lips apart;  
Salt of pure and pepper of vile  
Must season the extremer heart.

10

A pinch of fair, a pinch of foul,  
And bad and good make best of all;  
Beware the moderated soul  
That climbs no fractional inch to fall.

15

Reason's a rabbit in a hutch,  
And ecstasy's a werewolf's ghost;  
But, O, beware the nothing-much  
And welcome madness and the most!

20

## VELVET SHOES

Let us walk in the white snow  
In a soundless space;  
With footsteps quiet and slow,  
At a tranquil pace,  
Under veils of white lace.

5

I shall go shod in silk,  
And you in wool,  
White as a white cow's milk,  
More beautiful  
Than the breast of a gull.

10

We shall walk through the still town  
In a windless peace;  
We shall step upon white down,  
Upon silver fleece,  
Upon softer than these.

15

We shall walk in velvet shoes:  
 Wherever we go  
 Silence will fall like dews  
 On white silence below.  
 We shall walk in the snow.

20

## PRETTY WORDS

Poets make pets of pretty, docile words:  
 I love smooth words, like gold-enameled fish  
 Which circle slowly with a silken swish,  
 And tender ones, like downy-feathered birds:  
 Words shy and dappled, deep-eyed deer in herds, 5  
 Come to my hand, and playful if I wish,  
 Or purring softly at a silver dish,  
 Blue Persian kittens, fed on cream and curds.

I love bright words, words up and singing early;  
 Words that are luminous in the dark, and sing; 10  
 Warm lazy words, white cattle under trees;  
 I love words opalescent, cool, and pearly,  
 Like midsummer moths, and honeyed words like bees,  
 Gilded and sticky, with a little sting.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Select phrases or figures of speech which show the poet's unexpectedness, her love of the fantastic image, her appeal to the senses, especially of sound and touch.
2. Why does the picture of the sea seem more sinister than if she had described a destructive storm?
3. Explain the "sense" of the "Nonsense Rhyme." Do you agree with her choice between the extremes and the middle course? An informal debate on the subject might be of interest.
4. Can you find words in any of these poems which illustrate the kind she professes to love in "Pretty Words," especially in the last line?
5. "Pretty Words" is a sonnet (see page 711 for definition). What other modern sonnets can you find? Why do you think this is a popular form with poets?

## EDNA ST. VINCENT MILLAY (1892- )

Edna St. Vincent Millay comes from a poetry-writing family, for her mother and sister have also published volumes of verse. She was born in Rockland, Maine, and her early life was spent in New England. When she was nineteen she wrote "Renascece," a poem of such remarkable spiritual insight that she was at once heralded as a coming poet. This poem was the title piece in her first volume, published in 1917, the same year that she left Vassar College. Since then she has published eight other slender but significant volumes of poetry; several short plays in verse; and *The King's Henchman*, a libretto to the opera by Deems Taylor. This is a notable attempt to establish the hitherto undeveloped form of grand opera in America. Aside from its musical setting the libretto has taken its own place as a splendid poetic drama. Miss Millay's flowing melody is evident in her short lyrics. In her earlier poems one finds often exuberance of life; occasionally pertness; but more frequently than either a kind of lyric wistfulness, a pathos with the quality of Irish folklore. This is especially noticeable in *The Harp-Weaver*. Observe the unusual backwash of rhyme in the middle of each stanza of "The Spring and the Fall," taken from this volume. In *The Buck in the Snow*, from which "Dirge without Music" is taken, there is a growing bitterness at the injustices and tragedies of life. In *Wine from These Grapes* (1934) she peers backward into the dim past and forward into the dim future, seeking the unified pattern of human experience. "Autumn Daybreak" and "If Still Your Orchards Bear" are both from this volume.

## L A M E N T

The poignancy of this poem, from the volume *Second April*, lies in the twist of the last line, which comes like a cold shiver at the heart after the matter-of-fact tone of the first part.

Listen, children:  
Your father is dead.  
From his old coats  
I'll make you little jackets;  
I'll make you little trousers 5  
From his old pants.  
There'll be in his pockets  
Things he used to put there,  
Keys and pennies  
Covered with tobacco; 10  
Dan shall have the pennies

To save in his bank;  
 Anne shall have the keys  
 To make a pretty noise with. 15  
 Life must go on,  
 And the dead be forgotten;  
 Life must go on,  
 Though good men die;  
 Anne, eat your breakfast;  
 Dan, take your medicine; 20  
 Life must go on;  
 I forget just why.

### THE SPRING AND THE FALL

In the spring of the year, in the spring of the year,  
 I walked the road beside my dear.  
 The trees were black where the bark was wet.  
 I see them yet, in the spring of the year.  
 He broke me a bough of the blossoming peach 5  
 That was out of the way and hard to reach.

In the fall of the year, in the fall of the year,  
 I walked the road beside my dear.  
 The rooks went up with a raucous trill.  
 I hear them still, in the fall of the year. 10  
 He laughed at all I dared to praise,  
 And broke my heart, in little ways.

Year be springing or year be falling,  
 The bark will drip and the birds be calling.  
 There's much that's fine to see and hear 15  
 In the spring of a year, in the fall of a year.  
 'Tis not love's going hurts my days,  
 But that it went in little ways.

### DIRGE WITHOUT MUSIC

I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard  
 ground.  
 So it is, and so it will be, for so it has been time out of mind:  
 Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely. Crowned  
 With lilies and with laurel they go; but I am not resigned.

Lovers and thinkers, into the earth with you, 5  
Be one with the dull, the indiscriminate dust.  
A fragment of what you felt, of what you knew,  
A formula, a phrase remains, — but the best is lost.

The answers quick and keen, the honest look, the laughter, the love, —  
They are gone. They are gone to feed the roses. Elegant and 10  
curled  
Is the blossom. Fragrant is the blossom. I know. But I do not ap-  
prove.  
More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses of the world.

Down, down, down into the darkness of the grave  
Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind;  
Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave. 15  
I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

## AUTUMN DAYBREAK

Cold wind of autumn, blowing loud  
At dawn, a fortnight overdue,  
Jostling the doors, and tearing through  
My bedroom to rejoin the cloud,

I know — for I can hear the hiss 5  
And scrape of leaves along the floor —  
How many boughs, lashed bare by this,  
Will rake the cluttered sky once more.

Tardy, and somewhat south of east,  
The sun will rise at length, made known 10  
More by the meager light increased  
Than by a disk in splendor shown;

When, having but to turn my head,  
Through the stripped maple I shall see,  
Bleak and remembered, patched with red, 15  
The hill all summer hid from me.



## IF STILL YOUR ORCHARDS BEAR

Brother, that breathe the August air  
 Ten thousand years from now,  
 And smell — if still your orchards bear  
 Tart apples on the bough —

The early windfall under the tree 5  
 And see the red fruit shine,  
 I cannot think your thoughts will be  
 Much different from mine.

Should at that moment the full moon  
 Step forth upon the hill, 10  
 And memories hard to bear at noon,  
 By moonlight harder still,

Form in the shadows of the trees, —  
 Things that you could not spare  
 And live, or so you thought, yet these 15  
 All gone, and you still there,

A man no longer what he was,  
 Nor yet the thing he'd planned,  
 The chilly apple from the grass  
 Warmed by your living hand — 20

I think you will have need of tears;  
 I think they will not flow;  
 Supposing in ten thousand years  
 Men ache, as they do now.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What similarity in the mood and situation do you find in "Lament" and "The Spring and the Fall"? What point of difference is there? Which do you find more poignant?
2. Explain the last two lines of "The Spring and the Fall." Do you get any hint of what these "little ways" were? Give some specific examples to illustrate what they might have been.
3. "Dirge without Music" is one of the most recent poems on death in

our literature. Contrast it with "Thanatopsis" (see page 467) of a century ago, and "The Stirrup Cup" (see page 585) and "Darest Thou Now O Soul" (see page 568) and Whitman's "Carol of Death" (see page 562) of half a century ago. Which of all of them seems to you the best way to look at death? Do you think that these poems express in any way the feelings of their respective generations, or just the feelings of these individual poets?

### *For Ambitious Students*

4. Compare "Autumn Daybreak" with Sara Teasdale's "Leaves" (see page 667). What point of similarity do you find in the two? Which of the two is more obviously an allegory of life? Could the other also be given an allegorical meaning?

5. Read Millay's "God's World," a well-known poem found in many collections, which also pictures autumn. What striking contrast is there in the mood of these two poems? Contrast "Autumn Daybreak" also with Carman's "A Vagabond Song" (see page 599). Which mood does autumn more commonly arouse in you?

6. In "If Still Your Orchards Bear" what unusual companionship in her loneliness does the author seek? In the same volume, *Wine from These Grapes*, Miss Millay writes a series of sonnets, called "Epitaph on the Race of Man," in which she traces the history of mankind through the ages. It is interesting to read these and compare them with this poem. They illustrate both the significance and the insignificance of time.

## LOUIS UNTERMAYER (1885- )

Louis Untermeyer has humorously branded himself as "the least educated writer in America," because his failure in mathematics prevented his graduation from a New York high school. In youth he dreamed of becoming a composer; but his compositions turned out to be in poetry rather than for the piano, as he had contemplated. Through twenty years of business life in a jewelry-manufacturing establishment of New Jersey he wrote and published his poetry, until in 1923 he retired from business to devote himself entirely to literature. He is known not only for his own vigorous, challenging lyrics, but for his literary parodies, translations, critical volumes, and especially his anthologies. The number and quality of the last two types make Louis Untermeyer the outstanding collector and interpreter of poetry in America today.

The first two of the following poems—from *Burning Bush*—show nature from the point of view of the city man. The impact between nature and civilization displays ironic contrast in the first poem and interminable contest in the second.

## TO A TELEGRAPH POLE

You should be done with blossoming by now.  
 Yet here are leaves closer than any bough  
 That welcomes ivy. True, you were a tree  
 And stood with others in a marching line,  
 Less regular than this, of spruce and pine 5  
 And boasted branches rather than a trunk.  
 This is your final winter, all arms shrunk  
 To one crossbar bearing haphazardly  
 Four rusty strands. You cannot hope to feel  
 The electric sap run through those veins of steel. 10  
 The birds know this; the birds have hoodwinked you,  
 Crowding about you as they used to do.  
 The rainy robins huddled on your wire  
 And those blackbirds with shoulders dipped in fire  
 Have made you dream these vines; these tendrils are 15  
 A last despair in green, familiar  
 To derelicts of earth as well as sea.  
 Do not believe them, there is mockery  
 In their cool little jets of song. They know  
 What everyone but you learned long ago: 20  
 The stream of stories humming through your head  
 Is not your own. You dream. But you are dead.

## LONG FEUD

Where, without bloodshed, can there be  
 A more relentless enmity  
 Than the long feud fought silently  
 Between man and the growing grass?  
 Man's the aggressor, for he has 5  
 Weapons to humble and harass  
 The impudent spears that charge upon  
 His sacred privacy of lawn.  
 He mows them down, and they are gone  
 Only to lie in wait, although 10  
 He builds above and digs below  
 Where never a root would dare to go.

His are the triumphs till the day  
There's no more grass to cut away,  
And, weary of labor, weary of play, 15  
Having exhausted every whim,  
He stretches out each conquering limb.  
And then the small grass covers him.

## PRAYER

Emerson defines prayer as "the contemplation of facts from the highest point of view." In the light of that definition read this "Prayer" thoughtfully. It is from *Challenge*.

God, though this life is but a wraith,  
Although we know not what we use,  
Although we grope with little faith,  
Give me the heart to fight — and lose.  
Ever insurgent let me be, 5  
Make me more daring than devout;  
From sleek contentment keep me free,  
And fill me with a buoyant doubt.  
Open my eyes to visions girt  
With beauty, and with wonder lit — 10  
But let me always see the dirt,  
And all that spawn and die in it.  
Open my ears to music; let  
Me thrill with Spring's first flutes and drums —  
But never let me dare forget 15  
The bitter ballads of the slums.  
From compromise and things half done,  
Keep me, with stern and stubborn pride;  
And when, at last, the fight is won,  
God, keep me still unsatisfied. 20

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Compare "Long Feud" with Whitman's discussion of grass in "Song of Myself" (see page 555) and Sandburg's "Grass" (see page 641).

2. In "Prayer" why does the poet want to "see the dirt," hear the "bitter ballads," and remain "still unsatisfied"?

3. A delightful book for outside reading is Untermeyer's *From Another World*. In it you will see many of the modern poets through the eyes of an intimate friend.

## STEPHEN VINCENT BENÉT (1898- )

Stephen Vincent Benét was born in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. He graduated from Yale and took his master's degree there. He published two volumes before leaving college; and within ten years after graduation he had won both the *Nation's* poetry prize and the Pulitzer Prize, the latter for *John Brown's Body*. He is generally regarded as one of our most individual poets. In recent years he has turned his attention also to short-story writing and has proved his versatility in the volumes *Thirteen O'Clock* and *Tales before Midnight*.

Benét comes from a literary family. His brother, William Rose Benét, is a well-known critic and poet; his sister, Laura, is a novelist. His wife, Rosemary, has collaborated with him on *A Book of Americans*, amusing light verse portrayals of famous men; Elinor Wylie was his sister-in-law. Though he is a Northerner by birth and education, Stephen Benét is bound by no narrow geographical limits. His interest in widely differing Southern types and his understanding of their inner spirit are both shown in the two examples of his poetry given here.

## MARY LOU WINGATE

### *from* JOHN BROWN'S BODY

When *John Brown's Body* was published in 1928, it attained that unusual distinction for a book of poetry—appearance on the best-seller lists. It is truly a remarkable book, the first serious attempt in poetry to present an impartial view of the War between the States. It is epic in its all-inclusiveness, yet it lacks the unified form of the typical epic. Instead of telling his story in a continuous narrative, the author has taken a number of representative characters, some real, some fictional, and has placed them in scenes that were significant of the trend of the war. The scene shifts rapidly from one group to another, but a connected thread of plot within each group maintains the reader's interest throughout. The metrical form also shifts. Some parts are in blank verse, some in free verse, some in pure lyrical form, while this sketch of Mary Lou Wingate, the lady of the plantation, is presented with the firm vigor and occasional satirical flash of rhymed couplet.

Mary Lou Wingate, as slightly made  
 And as hard to break as a rapier blade.  
 Bristol's daughter and Wingate's bride,  
 Never well since the last child died  
 But staring at pain with courteous eyes. 5  
 When the pain outwits it, the body dies,  
 Meanwhile the body bears the pain.  
 She loved her hands and they made her vain,  
 The tiny hands of her generation  
 That gathered the reins of the whole plantation; 10  
 The velvet sheathing the steel demurely  
 In the trained, light grip that holds so surely.

She was at work by candlelight,  
 She was at work in the dead of night,  
 Smoothing out troubles and healing schisms 15  
 And doctoring phthisics and rheumatisms,  
 Guiding the cooking and watching the baking,  
 The sewing, the soap- and candle-making,  
 The brewing, the darning, the lady-daughters,  
 The births and deaths in the Negro quarters, 20  
 Seeing that Suke had some new, strong shoes  
 And Joe got a week in the calaboose,  
 While Dicey's Jacob escaped a whipping  
 And the jelly bag dripped with its proper dripping,  
 And the shirts and estrangements were neatly mended, 25  
 And all of the tasks that never ended.

Her manner was gracious but hardly fervent  
 And she seldom raised her voice to a servant.  
 She was often mistaken, not often blind;  
 And she knew the whole duty of womankind, 30  
 To take the burden and have the power  
 And seem like the well-protected flower,  
 To manage a dozen industries  
 With a casual gesture in scraps of ease,  
 To hate the sin and to love the sinner 35  
 And to see that the gentlemen got their dinner  
 Ready and plenty and piping-hot  
 Whether you wanted to eat or not.  
 And always, always, to have the charm  
 That makes the gentlemen take your arm 40

But never the bright, unseemly spell  
 That makes strange gentlemen love too well,  
 Once you were married and settled down  
 With a suitable gentleman of your own.

And when that happened, and you had bred 45  
 The requisite children, living and dead,  
 To pity the fool and comfort the weak  
 And always let the gentlemen speak,  
 To succor your love from deep-struck roots  
 When gentlemen went to bed in their boots, 50  
 And manage a gentleman's whole plantation  
 In the manner befitting your female station.

This was the creed that her mother taught her  
 And the creed that she taught to every daughter.  
 She knew her Bible — and how to flirt 55  
 With a swansdown fan and a brocade skirt.  
 For she trusted in God but she liked formalities  
 And the world and heaven were both realities.  
 — In heaven, of course, we should all be equal,  
 But, until we came to that golden sequel, 60  
 Gentility must keep to gentility  
 Where God and breeding had made things stable,  
 While the rest of the cosmos deserved civility  
 But dined in its boots at the second table.

This view may be reckoned a trifle narrow, 65  
 But it had the driving force of an arrow,  
 And it helped Mary Lou to stand up straight,  
 For she was gentle, but she could hate  
 And she hated the North with the hate of Jael  
 When the dry hot hands went seeking the nail, 70  
 The terrible hate of women's ire,  
 The smoky, the long-consuming fire.  
 The Yankees were devils, and she could pray,  
 For devils, no doubt, upon Judgment Day,  
 But now in the world, she would hate them still 75  
 And send the gentlemen out to kill.

69. *Jael*: a woman of ancient Biblical times who killed the captain of the Canaanites by driving a nail through his forehead while he slept (see *Judg.* 4:15-22).

The gentlemen killed and the gentlemen died,  
 But she was the South's incarnate pride  
 That mended the broken gentlemen  
 And sent them out to the war again, 80  
 That kept the house with the man away  
 And baked the bricks where there was no clay,  
 Made courage from terror and bread from bran  
 And propped the South on a swansdown fan  
 Through four long years of ruin and stress, 85  
 The pride — and the deadly bitterness.

THE MOUNTAIN WHIPPOORWILL  
 (*Or, How Hillbilly Jim Won the Great Fiddlers' Prize*)

A GEORGIA ROMANCE

Up in the mountains, it's lonesome all the time,  
 (Sof' win' slewin' thu' the sweet-potato vine).

Up in the mountains, it's lonesome for a child,  
 (Whippoorwills a-callin' when the sap runs wild).

Up in the mountains, mountains in the fog, 5  
 Everythin's as lazy as an old houn' dog.

Born in the mountains, never raised a pet,  
 Don't want nuthin' an' never got it yet.

Born in the mountains, lonesome-born,  
 Raised runnin' ragged thu' the cockleburrs and corn. 10

Never knew my pappy, mebbe never should.  
 Think he was a fiddle made of mountain-laurel wood.

Never had a mammy to teach me pretty-please.  
 Think she was a whippoorwill, a-skitin' thu' the trees.

Never had a brother ner a whole pair of pants, 15  
 But when I start to fiddle, why, yuh got to start to dance!



*Listen to my fiddle — Kingdom Come — Kingdom Come!*  
*Hear the frogs a-chunkin' " Jug o' rum, Jug o' rum! "*  
*Hear that mountain whippoorwill be lonesome in the air,*  
*An' I'll tell yuh how I traveled to the Essex County Fair.* 20

Essex County has a mighty pretty fair,  
All the smarty fiddlers from the South come there.

Elbows flyin' as they rosin up the bow  
For the First Prize Contest in the Georgia Fiddlers' Show.

Old Dan Wheeling, with his whiskers in his ears,  
Kingpin fiddler for nearly twenty years. 25

Big Tom Sargent, with his blue walleye,  
An' Little Jimmy Weezer that can make a fiddle cry.

*All sittin' roun', spittin' high an' struttin' proud,*  
*(Listen, little whippoorwill, yuh better bug yore eyes!)*  
*Tun-a-tun-a-tunin' while the jedges told the crowd*  
*Them that got the mostest claps 'd win the bestest prize.* 30

Everybody waitin' for the first tweedle-dee,  
When in comes a-stumblin' — hillbilly me!

Bowed right pretty to the jedges an' the rest,  
Took a silver dollar from a hole inside my vest, 35

Plunked it on the table an' said, " There's my callin' card! "  
" An' anyone that licks me — well, he's got to fiddle hard! "

Old Dan Wheeling, he was laughin' fit to holler,  
Little Jimmy Weezer said, " There's one dead dollar! " 40

Big Tom Sargent had a yaller-toothy grin,  
But I tucked my little whippoorwill spang underneath my chin,  
An' petted it an' tuned it till the jedges said, " Begin! "

Big Tom Sargent was the first in line;  
He could fiddle all the bugs off a sweet-potato vine. 45  
He could fiddle down a possum from a mile-high tree,  
He could fiddle up a whale from the bottom of the sea.

Yuh could hear hands spankin' till they spanked each other raw,  
When he finished variations on "Turkey in the Straw."

Little Jimmy Weezer was the next to play; 50  
He could fiddle all night, he could fiddle all day.

He could fiddle chills, he could fiddle fever,  
He could make a fiddle rustle like a lowland river.

He could make a fiddle croon like a lovin' woman.  
An' they clapped like thunder when he'd finished strummin'. 55

Then came the ruck of the bobtailed fiddlers,  
The let's-go-easies, the fair-to-middlers.

They got their claps an' they lost their bicker,  
An' they all settled back for some more corn lick.

An' the crowd was tired of their no-'count squealing, 60  
When out in the center steps Old Dan Wheeling.

*He fiddled high and he fiddled low,  
(Listen, little whippoorwill; yuh got to spread yore wings!)*  
*He fiddled and fiddled with a cherry-wood bow.  
(Old Dan Wheeling's got bee honey in his strings.)* 65

He fiddled the wind by the lonesome moon,  
He fiddled a most almighty tune.

He started fiddling like a ghost.  
He ended fiddling like a host.

He fiddled north and he fiddled south, 70  
He fiddled the heart right out of yore mouth.

He fiddled here an' he fiddled there.  
He fiddled salvation everywhere.

*When he was finished, the crowd cut loose.  
(Whippoorwill, they's rain on yore breast.)* 75  
*An' I sat there wonderin' "What's the use?"*  
*(Whippoorwill, fly home to yore nest.)*

But I stood up pert an' I took my bow,  
An' my fiddle went to my shoulder, so.

An' — they wasn't no crowd to get me fazed — 80  
But I was alone where I was raised.

Up in the mountains, so still it makes yuh skeered.  
Where God lies sleepin' in his big white beard.

An' I heard the sound of the squirrel in the pine,  
An' I heard the earth a-breathin' thu' the long nighttime. 85

They've fiddled the rose, and they've fiddled the thorn,  
But they haven't fiddled the mountain corn.

They've fiddled sinful an' fiddled moral,  
But they haven't fiddled the breshwood laurel.

They've fiddled loud, and they've fiddled still, 90  
But they haven't fiddled the whippoorwill.

I started off with a *dump-diddle-dump*,  
(*Oh, hell's broke loose in Georgia!*)  
Skunk cabbage growin' by the bee-gum stump,  
(*Whippoorwill, yo're singin' now!*). . . . 95

My mother was a whippoorwill pert,  
My father, he was lazy,  
But I'm hell broke loose in a new store shirt  
To fiddle all Georgia crazy.

Swing yore partners — up an' down the middle! 100  
Sashay now — oh, listen to that fiddle!  
Flapjacks flippin' on a red-hot griddle,  
An' hell broke loose,  
Hell broke loose,  
Fire on the mountains — snakes in the grass. 105  
Satan's here a-bilin' — oh, Lordy, let him pass!  
Go down Moses, set my people free;  
Pop goes the weasel thu' the old Red Sea!

80. fazed: embarrassed.

Jonah sittin' on a hickory bough,  
 Up jumps a whale — an' where's yore prophet now? 110  
 Rabbit in the pea patch, possum in the pot,  
 Try an' stop my fiddle, now my fiddle's gettin' hot!  
 Whippoorwill, singin' thu' the mountain hush,  
 Whippoorwill, shoutin' from the burnin' bush,  
 Whippoorwill, cryin' in the stable door, 115  
 Sing tonight as yuh never sang before!  
 Hell's broke loose like a stompin' mountain shoat,  
 Sing till yuh bust the gold in yore throat!  
 Hell's broke loose for forty miles aroun'  
 Bound to stop yore music if yuh don't sing it down. 120  
 Sing on the mountains, little whippoorwill,  
 Sing to the valleys, an' slap 'em with a hill,  
 For I'm struttin' high as an eagle's quill,  
 An' hell's broke loose,  
 Hell's broke loose, 125  
 Hell's broke loose in Georgia!

They wasn't a sound when I stopped bowin',  
*(Whippoorwill, yuh can sing no more).*  
 But, somewhere or other, the dawn was growin',  
*(Oh, mountain whippoorwill!)* 130

An' I thought, "I've fiddled all night an' lost,  
 Yo're a good hillbilly, but yuh've been bossed."

So I went to congratulate old man Dan,  
 — But he puts his fiddle into my han' —  
 An' then the noise of the crowd began! 135

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

*Mary Lou Wingate*

1. Make a list of the main characteristics of Mary Lou Wingate. Have you known anyone like her? Does she fit with your previous idea of the lady of a plantation before the war? If you have read *Gone with the Wind* or have seen it in the movies, point out ways in which Mary Lou and Scarlett O'Hara are alike and unlike.

2. What elements of the old plantation life have passed away forever? Which remain in somewhat modified form?

*The Mountain Whippoorwill*

3. Picture in your own words the scene of the story, the appearance of the characters, and the speaker himself. Compare with Riley's "My Fiddle" (see page 594).

4. Why are certain lines put in italics? Wherein does the story use the dramatic devices of contrast, suspense, climax? What gives any public competition a dramatic flavor? How does the method of judging this contest compare with any you have witnessed or heard on the radio? Is the outcome of the contest more or less effective by being told so briefly? Discuss "quick curtains" in general.

5. Where in the poem do you feel that the poet is consciously building up sound effects? How do they compare in manner and effectiveness with Poe's? Vachel Lindsay's? Would this poem lend itself to choral reading, as suggested for those two poets?

6. By pointing out specific examples of idioms, figures of speech, details of nature, conceptions of Bible characters, superstitions, and so forth, show how the poet creates the local color of the unsophisticated mountain whites

## ROBINSON JEFFERS (1887- )

A tall, bronzed man, reserved in manner and living almost the life of a recluse, is Robinson Jeffers. His boyhood was spent in Pittsburgh, but from twelve to fifteen he attended school in Switzerland. Here he and his father, a man of scholarly tastes, took long walking trips in the Alps. When the family moved to California, Robinson had his college education at Occidental College, Los Angeles. Fortunately for his literary career, a legacy from an uncle left him free to live as he chose. He and his wife built a house on the top of a bluff overlooking the Pacific near Carmel, California. Not far from the house, Jeffers himself built a three-story stone tower. The first floor was for their twin sons born in 1916, the second floor was a sitting room for Mrs. Jeffers, and the top, a tiny room with a table and chair, was the poet's study. From this tower have come many volumes of singularly haunting and tantalizing poetry.

## JOY

Though joy is better than sorrow, joy is not great;  
Peace is great, strength is great.  
Not for joy the stars burn, not for joy the vulture  
Spreads her gray sails on the air  
Over the mountain; not for joy the worn mountain

Stands, while years like water  
 Trench his long sides. "I am neither mountain nor bird  
 Nor star; and I seek joy."  
 The weakness of your breed: yet at length quietness  
 Will cover those wistful eyes.

10

## THE PURSE SEINE

Our sardine fishermen work at night in the dark of the moon; day-  
 light or moonlight  
 They could not tell where to spread the net, unable to see the phos-  
 phorescence of the shoals of fish.  
 They work northward from Monterey, coasting Santa Cruz; off New  
 Year's Point or off Pigeon Point  
 The lookout man will see some lakes of milk-color light on the sea's  
 night-purple; he points, and the helmsman  
 Turns the dark prow, the motorboat circles the gleaming shoal and  
 drifts out her seine net. They close the circle 5  
 And purse the bottom of the net, then with great labor haul it in.

I cannot tell you  
 How beautiful the scene is, and a little terrible, then, when the  
 crowded fish  
 Know they are caught, and wildly beat from one wall to the other of  
 their closing destiny the phosphorescent  
 Water to a pool of flame, each beautiful slender body sheeted with  
 flame, like a live rocket 10  
 A comet's tail wake of clear yellow flame; while outside the narrowing  
 Floats and cordage of the net great sea lions come up to watch, sighing  
 in the dark; the vast walls of night  
 Stand erect to the stars.

Lately I was looking from a night mountaintop  
 On a wide city, the colored splendor, galaxies of light: how could I  
 help but recall the seine net 15  
 Gathering the luminous fish? I cannot tell you how beautiful the  
 city appeared, and a little terrible.  
 I thought, We have geared the machines and locked all together into  
 interdependence; we have built the great cities; now  
 There is no escape. We have gathered vast populations incapable of  
 free survival, insulated

2. **phosphorescence**: light given off without fire or heat.

From the strong earth, each person in himself helpless, on all depend-  
ent. The circle is closed, and the net  
Is being hauled in. They hardly feel the cords drawing, yet they shine  
already. The inevitable mass disasters 20  
Will not come in our time nor in our children's, but we and our chil-  
dren  
Must watch the net draw narrower, government take all powers — or  
revolution, and the new government  
Take more than all, add to kept bodies kept souls — or anarchy, the  
mass disasters.

These things are Progress;  
Do you marvel our verse is troubled or frowning, while it keeps its  
reason? Or it lets go, lets the mood flow 25  
In the manner of the recent young men into mere hysteria, splintered  
gleams, crackled laughter. But they are quite wrong.  
There is no reason for amazement: surely one always knew that cul-  
tures decay, and life's end is death.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what way are peace and strength greater than joy and sorrow? How do the poet's illustrations help you see the answer? Who is speaking in lines 7-8? What do you think the poet means by the last two lines?
2. In "The Purse Seine," between what two pictures is the comparison drawn? The poet develops his idea by "analogy." In what other poems in this section has the idea been developed in this way? Do you see a difference between this and the "moral tag"?
3. What does the poet feel will be the ultimate end of massed population in cities? Is his prophecy for the immediate or distant future?
4. From these two poems would you say that Jeffers tends to be optimistic or pessimistic about the future? Justify your answer.

#### ARCHIBALD MACLEISH (1892- )

Archibald MacLeish was born in Glencoe, Illinois, in what he describes as a wooden château overlooking Lake Michigan. He graduated from Yale and was in France during the World War, where his brother was killed in the air service. After the war MacLeish graduated from the Harvard law school and practiced law for three years; but he finally gave it up in 1923, from which time he dates the real beginning of his life. He

took his family to headquarters in France for five years, and they traveled as far as Persia. After 1928 he was back in this country living on a farm and writing poetry. In 1939 he was appointed by President Roosevelt head of the Library of Congress.

Six volumes of verse preceded *Conquistador*, which eventually brought him national reputation. Since then he has experimented with radio drama, *Air Raid* being a notable innovation in form. MacLeish has much to say and says it with originality and incisive force.

## NOCTURNE

The earth, still heavy and warm with afternoon,  
Dazed by the moon

The earth, tormented with the moon's light,  
Wandering in the night

La La the moon is a lovely thing to see — 5  
The moon is an agony

Full moon, moonrise, the old, old pain  
Of brightness in dilated eyes

The ache of still  
Elbows leaning in the narrow sill 10

Of motionless cold hands upon the wet  
Marble of the parapet

Of open eyelids of a child behind  
The crooked glimmer of the window blind

Of sliding faint remindful squares 15  
Across the lamplight on the rocking chairs

Why do we stand so late  
Stiff fingers on the moonlit gate?

Why do we stand  
To watch so-long the fall of moonlight on the sand? 20

What is it we cannot recall?

Tormented by the moon's light  
The earth turns wandering through the night.



# IT IS A STRANGE THING—TO BE AN AMERICAN

*from* AMERICAN LETTER

It is a strange thing — to be an American.  
 It is strange to sleep in the bare stars and to die  
 On an open land where few bury before us:  
 (From the new earth the dead return no more).  
 It is strange to be born of no race and no people. 5  
 In the old lands they are many together. They keep  
 The wise past and the words spoken in common.  
 They remember the dead with their hands, their mouths dumb.  
 They answer each other with two words in their meeting.  
 They live together in small things. They eat 10  
 The same dish, their drink is the same and their proverbs.  
 Their youth is like. They are like their ways of love.  
 They are many men. There are always others beside them.  
 Here it is one man and another and wide  
 On the darkening hills the faint smoke of the houses. 15  
 Here it is one man and the wind in the boughs.

Therefore our hearts are sick for the south water.  
 The smell of the gorse comes back to our night thought.  
 We are sick at heart for the red roofs and the olives;  
 We are sick at heart for the voice and the footfall. . . . 20

Therefore we will not go though the sea call us.

This, this is our land, this is our people,  
 This that is neither a land nor a race. We must reap  
 The wind here in the grass for our soul's harvest:  
 Here we must eat our salt or our bones starve. 25  
 Here we must live or live only as shadows.  
 This is our race, we that have none, that have had  
 Neither the old walls nor the voices around us,  
 This is our land, this is our ancient ground —  
 The raw earth, the mixed bloods and the strangers, 30  
 The different eyes, the wind, and the heart's change.  
 These we will not leave though the old call us.  
 This is our country-earth, our blood, our kind.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In "Nocturne" what are some of the human experiences just suggested by a couplet or so apiece? How many pictures do you see of people looking at the moonlight? How is the tantalizing effect of moonlight emphasized?

2. Compare this poem with Sandburg's "Night Stuff" (see page 644). Do the two poems suggest a difference in the emotional effect of moonlight upon a person?

3. In "It Is a Strange Thing" what kinds of differences are brought out between America and Europe? What effect do these differences have upon the attitude of the American toward his country? Can you give specific examples to show that the tie of the new land is stronger than the tie to the old home across the water?

## FOR FURTHER READING OF POETRY

## COLLECTIONS OF POETRY

Bates, Herbert, *Modern Lyric Poetry*

Braithwaite, W. S. B., *Anthology of Magazine Verse* (issued annually)

Broadhurst, Jean, and Rhodes, C. L., *Verse for Patriots*

Bryan, G. S., *Poems of Country Life*

Clark, G. H., *A Treasury of War Poetry*

Cunliffe, J. W., *Poems of the Great War*

Daringer, H. F., and Eaton, A. T., *The Poet's Craft*

Davis, M. G., *The Girls' Book of Verse*

Drinkwater, John, Canby, H. S., and Benét, W. R., *Twentieth Century Poetry*

Fish, H. D., *The Boys' Book of Verse*

Gayley, C. M., and Flaherty, M. C., *Poetry of the People*

Gordon, Marjory, and King, M. B., *Verse of Our Day*

Law, F. H., *Selections from American Poetry*

Leonard, S. A., *Poems of the War and Peace*

Lieberman, Elias, *Poems for Enjoyment*

Markham, Edwin, *The Book of Poetry* (Vol. I, *American*)

Mims, Edwin, and Payne, B. R., *Southern Prose and Poetry*

Monroe, Harriet, and Henderson, A. C., *The New Poetry*

Page, C. H., *Chief American Poets*

Repplier, Agnes, *A Book of Famous Verse*

Richards, Mrs. Waldo, *The Melody of Earth; High-Tide; Star Points*

Rittenhouse, Jessie, *The Little Book of American Poets; The Little Book of Modern Verse* (3 vols.)

Sanders, G. DeW., and Nelson, J. H., *Chief Modern Poets of England and America*

Schauffler, R. H., *The Poetry Cure*

Stevenson, Burton, *Famous Single Poems; Home Book of Verse; Home Book of Verse for Young People*

Untermeyer, Louis, *Modern American Poetry; This Singing World; Yesterday and Today*

Wilkinson, Marguerite, *Contemporary Poetry; New Voices*

#### OTHER POETS OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The best way for high-school students to become acquainted with the many excellent poets of the present is to read widely in the anthologies listed above. Poets frequently represented in these collections are:

Conrad Aiken, "H. D." (Hilda Doolittle, Mrs. Richard Aldington), William Rose Benét, Benjamin Brawley, Sterling Brown, Witter Bynner. Madison Cawein, Grace Hazard Conkling, Hilda Conkling, Nathalia Crane. Adelaide Crapsey, Countee Cullen, Thomas Augustine Daly, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Paul Engle, John Gould Fletcher, Theodosia Garrison. Fannie Stearns Davis (Mrs. Augustus M. Gifford), Louise Imogen Guiney, Herman Hagedorn, Langston Hughes, Joyce Kilmer. Aline Murray Kilmer, Alfred Kreymborg, Richard Le Gallienne, Alain Locke. Harriet Monroe. Ezra Pound, Lizette Woodworth Reese, Lew R. Sarett, Robert Haven Schauffler, Clinton Scollard, Frank Dempster Sherman, Anne Spencer. Eunice Tietjens (Mrs. Cloyd Head), Jean Starr Untermeyer, Margaret Widdemer.

## *Light Verse*

FOR A mood of lighthearted gaiety the rhythm of verse and the snap of an unexpected rhyme are often more effective than prose. We have gradually accumulated in America a tremendous mass of light, humorous verse, some of which is so well written that it will probably go on amusing readers for generations to come. You have already seen Holmes and Lowell in their merry as well as their serious moments. Others of our major poets have written light verse of great charm and wit; but there is another group of versifiers who do not pretend to be serious poets, but have a gift for turning a clever phrase and bringing a laugh. Many of them have been newspaper col-

umnists who have established a following through their daily contacts. Others have built a wide reputation through repeated successes as magazine contributors.

In the following group of verses you will find great variety—hearty Western humor, clever “society verse,” the surprise ending, the parody on serious poetry, the caricature, the humor based on a neat juggling of words or meters or even the absence of punctuation marks! There are no “Suggestions for Study” in this little section. Just enjoy the verses, and — if the spirit moves you — try the fun of writing some light verse of your own.

### BRET HARTE (1839-1902)

Bret Harte is a familiar name in the short story (see page 103). In the field of light verse he has also introduced the spice of humor from the days of the Western mining camp. The following poem, one of his best known, suggests the slow drawl of the miner, his exaggeration of statement at one moment and his understatement the next. Note the way in which he leaves the final punishment of Ah Sin to the reader's imagination. “Truthful James” appears in others of Harte's poems and is supposed to have been based on Jim Gillis, the mining partner of Mark Twain.

#### PLAIN LANGUAGE FROM TRUTHFUL JAMES

TABLE MOUNTAIN, 1870

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Which I wish to remark,                 |   |
| And my language is plain,               |   |
| That for ways that are dark             |   |
| And for tricks that are vain,           |   |
| The heathen Chinees is peculiar,        | 5 |
| Which the same I would rise to explain. |   |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Ah Sin was his name;                        |    |
| And I shall not deny,                       |    |
| In regard to the same,                      |    |
| What that name might imply;                 | 10 |
| But his smile it was pensive and childlike, |    |
| As I frequent remarked to Bill Nye.         |    |

It was August the third,  
 And quite soft was the skies;  
 Which it might be inferred 15  
 That Ah Sin was likewise;  
 Yet he played it that day upon William  
 And me in a way I despise.

Which we had a small game,  
 And Ah Sin took a hand: 20  
 It was euchre. The same  
 He did not understand;  
 But he smiled as he sat by the table,  
 With the smile that was childlike and bland.

Yet the cards they were stocked 25  
 In a way that I grieve,  
 And my feelings were shocked  
 At the state of Nye's sleeve,  
 Which was stuffed full of aces and bowers,  
 And the same with intent to deceive. 30

But the hands that were played  
 By that heathen Chinee,  
 And the points that he made,  
 Were quite frightful to see —  
 Till at last he put down a right bower, 35  
 Which the same Nye had dealt unto me.

Then I looked up at Nye,  
 And he gazed upon me;  
 And he rose with a sigh,  
 And said, "Can this be? 40  
 We are ruined by Chinese cheap labor," —  
 And he went for that heathen Chinee.

In the scene that ensued  
 I did not take a hand,  
 But the floor it was strewed 45  
 Like the leaves on the strand  
 With the cards that Ah Sin had been hiding,  
 In the game "he did not understand."

20. **bowers:** jacks, important cards in the game of euchre.

In his sleeves, which were long,  
     He had twenty-four packs — 50  
 Which was coming it strong,  
     Yet I state but the facts;  
 And we found on his nails, which were taper,  
     What is frequent in tapers — that's wax.

Which is why I remark, 55  
     And my language is plain,  
 That for ways that are dark  
     And for tricks that are vain,  
 The heathen Chinese is peculiar —  
     Which the same I am free to maintain. 60

## HENRY CUYLER BUNNER (1855-1896)

In his long years as editor of *Puck*, H. C. Bunner himself contributed a great part of the clever bits that made the first of our major comic weeklies popular during the eighties and nineties. His short stories, particularly in his volume called *Short Sixes*, are excellent examples of the light, well-constructed plot, often with surprise ending. Bunner's writing represents largely the effervescence and social charm of the well-to-do classes. In this way he is akin to Thomas Bailey Aldrich, and his humor is in marked contrast to the hearty Western variety supplied by Mark Twain and Bret Harte.

## CANDOR

OCTOBER — A WOOD

"I know what you're going to say," she said,  
     And she stood up looking uncommonly tall;  
 "You are going to speak of the hectic fall,  
 And say you're sorry the summer's dead.  
     And no other summer was like it, you know, 5  
     And can I imagine what made it so?  
 Now aren't you, honestly?" "Yes," I said.

"I know what you're going to say," she said;  
     "You are going to ask if I forget  
     That day in June when the woods were wet, 10

And you carried me " — here she dropped her head —

" Over the creek ; you are going to say,

Do I remember that horrid day.

Now aren't you, honestly? " " Yes," I said.

" I know what you're going to say," she said; 15

" You are going to say that since that time

You have rather tended to run to rhyme,

And " — her clear glance fell and her cheek grew red —

" And I have noticed your tone was queer? —

Why, everybody has seen it here! — 20

Now aren't you, honestly? " " Yes," I said.

" I know what you're going to say," I said;

" You're going to say you've been much annoyed,

And I'm short of tact — you will say devoid —

And I'm clumsy and awkward, and call me Ted, 25

And I bear abuse like a dear old lamb,

And you'll have me anyway, just as I am,

Now aren't you, honestly? " " Ye-es," she said.

## CAROLYN WELLS

Carolyn Wells was one of the first women to attain eminence as a humorist and writer of light verse. She has published more than a dozen volumes of her own verse or compilations of the light verse of others. She has tried her hand at many types of humor but is best known for her nonsense verse and her parodies. She originated the Re-echo Club to give free play to her gift for parody. The quatrain here given as the subject to be rewritten is in itself a favorite bit of American nonsense verse. Miss Wells imitates the style of dozens of authors in retelling the purple cow, but only those authors appearing in this book are here included.

Unless you know the original on which a parody is based, the humor of exaggerated imitation is entirely lost. If you have never read the poems involved in these parodies, you should try to read them first in order to appreciate the "re-echo"; they are: Riley's "There, Little Girl, Don't Cry"; Aldrich's "Identity"; Longfellow's "The Day Is Done"; Bunner's "The Way to Arcady." Poe's "The Raven" is in this volume.

## DIVERSIONS OF THE RE-ECHO CLUB

The Re-echo Club attempted to write up the well-known tradition of the Purple Cow in more elaborate form than the quatrain made famous by Mr. Gelett Burgess:

“ I never saw a Purple Cow,  
I never hope to see one;  
But I can tell you anyhow,  
I'd rather see than be one.”

Here are a few of the productions:

*Mr. J. W. Riley*

There, little Cow, don't cry!  
You are brindle and brown, I know.  
And with wild glad hues  
Of reds and blues,  
You never will gleam and glow.  
But though not pleasing to the eye,  
There, little Cow, don't cry, don't cry.

*Mr. T. Aldrich*

Somewhere in some faked nature place,  
In Wonderland, in Nonsense Land,  
Two darkling shapes met face to face,  
And bade each other stand.

“ And who are you? ” said each to each;  
“ Tell me your title, anyhow.”  
One said, “ I am the Papal Bull,”  
“ And I the Purple Cow.”

*Mr. H. Longfellow*

The day is done, and the darkness  
Falls from the wing of night  
As ballast is wafted downward  
From an airship in its flight.

I dream of a purple creature  
Which is not as kine are now;  
And resembles cattle only  
As Cowper resembles a cow.



Such cows have power to quiet  
 Our restless thoughts and rude; 10  
 They come like the Benedictine  
 That follows after food.

*Mr. E. Allan Poe*

Open then I flung a shutter,  
 And, with many a flirt and flutter,  
 In there stepped a Purple Cow which gaily tripped around my floor.  
 Not the least obeisance made she,  
 Not a moment stopped or stayed she, 5  
 But with mien of chorus lady perched herself above my door.  
 On a dusty bust of Dante perched and sat above my door.

And that Purple Cow unfitting  
 Still is sitting — still is sitting  
 On that dusty bust of Dante just above my chamber door, 10  
 And her horns have all the seeming  
 Of a demon's that is screaming,  
 And the arc light o'er her streaming  
 Casts her shadow on the floor.  
 And my soul from out that pool of purple shadow on the floor, 15  
 Shall be lifted Nevermore!

*Mr. H. C. Bunner*

*Oh, what's the way to Arcady,  
 Where all the cows are purple?*  
 Ah, woe is me! I never hope  
 On such a sight my eyes to ope;  
 But as I sing in merry glee 5  
 Along the road to Arcady,  
 Perchance full soon I may espy  
 A Purple Cow come dancing by.  
 Heigho! I then shall see one.  
 Her horns bedecked with ribbons gay, 10  
 And garlanded with rosy may, —  
 A tricky sight. Still I must say  
 I'd rather see than be one.

## ARTHUR GUITERMAN (1871- )

Mr. Guiterman is undoubtedly one of the best writers of light humorous verse today. The gay swing of his lines is furthered by the neatness with which the right word falls into the right place. He is a master of polysyllables and unexpected rhymes. Since there is often question as to the pronunciation of his name, he has written a little verse to remind those who are doubtful that his name rhymes not with "cuter man" or "brighter man," but with "fitter man."

Arthur Guiterman was born in Vienna, but his parents were Americans. After receiving his degree from the College of the City of New York, he served at various times on the staffs of the *Woman's Home Companion*, the *Literary Digest*, and other magazines. He spends much of his time on lecture tours, using different aspects of humor as his subject. His home is in New York City. Some of his many volumes of verse are *The Laughing Muse*, *The Mirthful Lyre*, *Chips of Jade*.

## HOW THE FEUD STARTED

Before there were Pineapples, Peaches, or Plums,  
The Dog and the Cat were Companions and Chums.

(They lived in a Highly Respectable Grotto,  
Where "God Bless Our Home" was their Favorite Motto.)

The Dog had a Parchment, a Parchment had he, 5  
Proclaiming his Right to be Happy and Free.

(This Charter was signed by the Patriarch Noah,  
And Witnessed in Form by the Goat and the Boar.)

The Dog went a-hunting on Mount Ararat;  
The Parchment he left in the Care of the Cat. 10

(His Trust in the Cat was Complete and Abiding,  
The Dog, then as ever, was Much Too Confiding.)

The Cat, who was always a Rover in Soul,  
Grew bored with the Cavern and went for a Stroll.

(Beguiled by the Song of the Birds in the Bowers, 15  
He ambled and rambled for Hours and Hours.)

Then out from their Crannies the Mouse People crept,  
And lunched on the Parchment that Puss should have kept.

(They flocked with their Children, their Nephews and Nieces;  
They shredded the Charter and ate up the Pieces.) 20

When Home came the Dog near the Close of the Day,  
The Last of his Freedom was whisking away!

(He Leaped! — but the Tails disappeared in a Flicker.  
The Dog may be Quick, but the Mouse Folk are quicker.)

When Home strolled the Cat as the Twilight grew dim, 25  
The Dog paid the Utmost Attention to *Him!*

(The Cat, who in climbing was always a Leader,  
Escaped by a Whisker and ran up a Cedar.)

So, seeking his Vengeance — and justly at that,  
The Dog, through the Ages, still chases the Cat. 30

(The Cat, with Equivalent Justification,  
Has chosen the Mouse as his favorite Ration.)

### DON MARQUIS (1878-1938)

Is it any wonder that a man with a name like Donald Robert Perry Marquis and a humorous turn of mind should become Don Marquis permanently? Like so many of our other humorists, he was born in the Mississippi Valley. His birthplace was Walnut, Illinois, which he describes as "one of those towns that prop two cornfields apart." His young manhood was occupied with trying his hand at "almost all the trades and professions that flourished in Walnut and vicinity." This same pleasing variety was evident when he went to Washington, D. C., and combined a job in the census office with newspaper reporting and study in an art school. Later he assisted Joel Chandler Harris with *Uncle Remus' Magazine* in Atlanta, and finally settled down to a long career in New York newspaperdom, where his column, "The Sun Dial" in the New York *Sun*, made his reputation.



*"The Nation's Bulwark: A Well-disciplined Militia."*

EARLY CARTOONS. A glorious privilege of democracy is the right of free criticism, and American cartoonists have always been ready to poke fun at institutions that seem to need a little house-cleaning. If we can believe Richard Hobson, the American militia (*above*) needed reworking in 1829.

Travel in foreign parts has drawn the darts of both writers and artists, but A. B. Frost managed to get into his picture (*below*) enough detailed comment on newly acquired affectation to fill many a page of writing.



*Photos, Culver*

*"The George Washington Jones Family Return from Paris."*



Culver

### The Cash System

BOTH SENSE AND NONSENSE. Currier and Ives's ingenious lecture on the advantages of cash over credit (*above*) must have hung on the walls of many a general store up and down the country, amusing the customers to soften the "no-credit" policy.

Long after the heyday of Gibson Girls, the pompadoured, shirt-waisted girl was remembered and made the basis of new jokes. "The Gay Nineties" (*below*) was drawn in 1925.



### The Last Word in Compliments

"What's the matter with Etta Purdy? She hardly spoke to us."

"Oh, she's been that way ever since somebody called her a Gibson Girl."

Life, 1925

You have heard of sleeping in the bathtub, and hanging the children up on hooks. Augustus Hoppin shows exactly how it was done (*right*) and explains when — during the Boston Jubilee in 1872.

*"Comfortable Family Quarters During the Jubilee."*

*Culver*

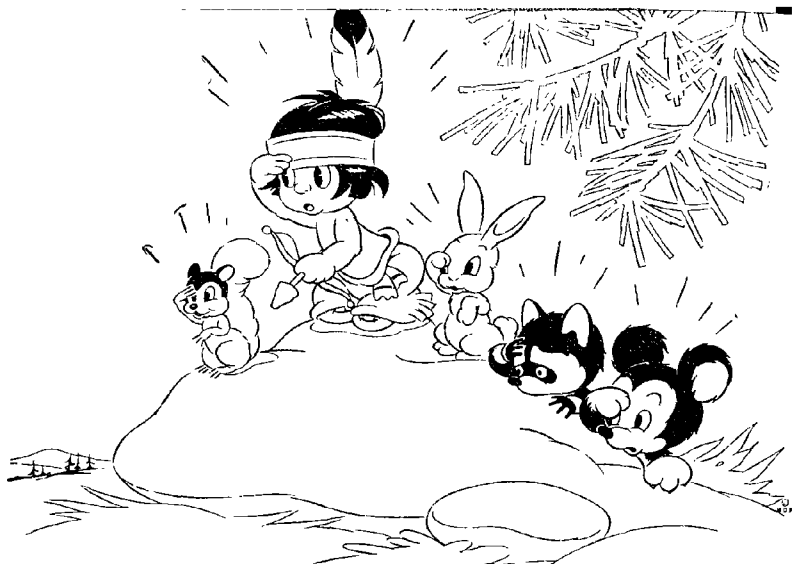


E. W. Kemble for many years entertained readers of *Life* when it was a humorous magazine — before it became a picture magazine. He was a quiet master of the gentle art of humorous exaggeration.

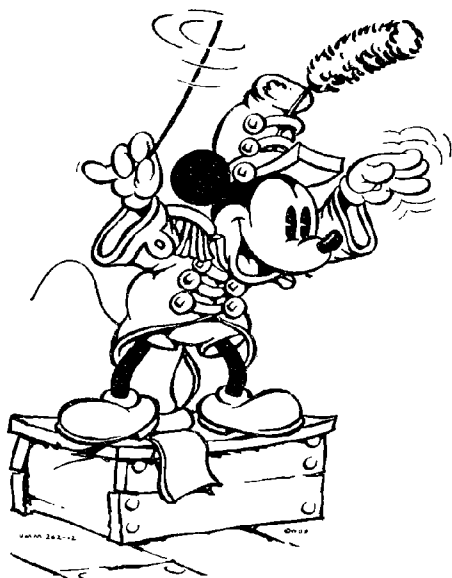


*"Spring, Spring, Gentle Spring."*

*E. W. Kemble: from Life*



© Walt Disney



© Walt Disney



Many cartoon characters like Webster's Mr. Casper Milquetoast, "The Gentle Soul," are known and loved all over America, but Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse is known and loved all over the world. With humor and whimsical charm, Disney brings new life to old stories. At the top of the page is his version of the boy Hiawatha with his little friends of forest and field.

Like many of our humorists, Don Marquis has the gift of creating a vivid humorous character; but, unlike most of them, his fame rests on several widely differing types rather than on just one. One of his most amusing creations is "archy the cockroach" of the newspaper office. As a result of transmigration from a previous existence, archy has the soul of a free-verse poet. His innate longing for expression impels archy to use the typewriter at night to communicate to "the boss"; but as he cannot work the shift key, there are no capital letters and no punctuation marks in his effusions. He also has difficulty with the mechanism for making a new line and so his "poems" look most peculiar. Through the obvious satire on free verse and through the personalities of other creatures infesting the office, such as mehitabel the cat and freddy the rat, Marquis had a rich medium for amusing comment in his column.

### freddy the rat perishes

listen to me there have  
 been some doings here since last  
 i wrote there has been a battle  
 behind that rusty typewriter cover  
 in the corner 5  
 you remember freddy the rat well  
 freddy is no more but  
 he died game the other  
 day a stranger with a lot of  
 legs came into our little circle a tough looking kid 10  
 he was with a bad eye

who are you said a thousand legs  
 if I bite you once  
 said the stranger you won t ask  
 again he he little poison tongue said 15  
 the thousand legs who gave you hydrophobia  
 i got it by biting myself said  
 the stranger i m bad keep away  
 from me where I step a weed dies  
 if i was to walk on your forehead it would 20  
 raise measles and if  
 you give me any lip i ll do it

15. **he he**: derisive laughter, not a misprint as one might, at first glance, suppose. This "poem" makes one realize how much punctuation helps us understand the relationship between words.



they mixed it then  
 and the thousand legs succumbed  
 well we found out this fellow 25  
 was a tarantula he had come up from  
 south america in a bunch of bananas  
 for days he bossed us life  
 was not worth living he would stand in  
 the middle of the floor and taunt 30  
 us ha ha he would say where i  
 step a weed dies do  
 you want any of my game i was  
 raised on red pepper and blood i am  
 so hot if you scratch me i will light 35  
 like a match you better  
 dodge me when i m feeling mean and  
 i don t feel any other way i was nursed  
 on a tabasco bottle if i was to slap  
 your wrist in kindness you 40  
 would boil over like job and heaven  
 help you if i get angry give me  
 room i feel a wicked spell coming on  
  
 last night he made a break at freddy  
 the rat keep your distance 45  
 little one said freddy i m not  
 feeling well myself somebody poisoned some  
 cheese for me i m as full of  
 death as a drugstore i  
 feel that i am going to die anyhow 50  
 come on little torpedo come on don t stop  
 to visit and search then they  
 went at it and both are no more please  
 throw a late edition on the floor i want to  
 keep up with china we dropped freddy 55  
 off the fire escape into the alley with  
 military honors

archy

## FRANKLIN P. ADAMS (1881- )

Franklin Pierce Adams, usually known as F. P. A., is another of our most able columnists. He got his impetus from Eugene Field, had his first contributions published in B. L. T.'s column in the *Chicago Tribune*, and his first chance to write a column of his own with the *Chicago Journal*. Later he went to New York and after some experimental work found his final place with the *New York Tribune*, now the *Herald Tribune*. Here his column "The Conning Tower" established his permanent reputation. It now appears in the *New York Post*. On Tuesday evenings Mr. Adams, beginning in 1939, became one of the regulars on the well-known radio program "Information Please."

Mr. Adams maintains a high standard of humor and writes with the utmost sincerity. He loves to play a joke on his reader by ending a poem with an unexpectedly simple and naïve conclusion. For instance, one of his poems describes how some may sing of the surging sea, others of the Open Road, others of the bursting bomb, and so on, leading the reader on to anticipate that the climax will be the author's own preference. But, instead, the last line is: "And they all may sing of whatever they like, as far as I'm concerned." In the following poem he again plays a simple trick on the reader — or does he?

## THOSE TWO BOYS

When Bill was a lad he was terribly bad.

He worried his parents a lot;

He'd lie and he'd swear and pull little girl's hair;

His boyhood was naught but a blot.

At play and in school he would fracture each rule — 5

In mischief from autumn to spring;

And the villagers knew when to manhood he grew

He would never amount to a thing.

When Jim was a child he was not very wild;

He was known as a good little boy; 10

He was honest and bright and the teachers' delight —

To his father and mother a joy.

All the neighbors were sure that his virtue'd endure,

That his life would be free of a spot;

They were certain that Jim had a great head on him 15

And that Jim would amount to a lot.

And Jim grew to manhood and honor and fame  
 And bears a good name;  
 While Bill is shut up in a dark prison cell —  
 You never can tell.

20

### DOROTHY PARKER (1893- )

In any discussion of modern American humorous verse writers there is one woman who cannot be omitted, and probably only one. Though women have a sense of humor, it usually runs to appreciation rather than creation. Dorothy Parker, however, has a gift for satirical verse that places her in a class by herself. She has been described as "a delicate little thing of great beauty and charm, who writes and says the most cutting things with a lamblike air that would melt the heart of an iron statue." She is noted for her last lines, which are often like the pinprick to a toy balloon.

Mrs. Parker's maiden name was Dorothy Rothschild. She was born in New Jersey, and educated in private schools and a convent. Between 1916 and 1920 she was on the staff first of *Vogue*, then of *Vanity Fair*. Since 1920 she has been a free-lance writer, and half a dozen books have come from her pen. The best-known are *Enough Rope*, *Sunset Gun*, *Death and Taxes*. In 1929 she won the O. Henry Short Story award. In 1934 she turned to playwriting in collaboration with Elmer Rice, the result being *Close Harmony*. Her collection of short stories is called *Here Lies*.

### ONE PERFECT ROSE

A single flow'r he sent me, since we met.  
 All tenderly his messenger he chose;  
 Deephearted, pure, with scented dew still wet —  
 One perfect rose.

I knew the language of the floweret;  
 "My fragile leaves," it said, "his heart inclose."  
 Love long has taken for his amulet  
 One perfect rose.

5

Why is it no one ever sent me yet  
 One perfect limousine, do you suppose?  
 Ah no, it's always just my luck to get  
 One perfect rose.

10

## FOLK TUNE

Other lads, their ways are daring;  
 Other lads, they're not afraid;  
 Other lads, they show they're caring;  
 Other lads, — they know a maid.  
 Wiser Jock than ever you were, 5  
 Will's with gayer spirit blest,  
 Robin's kindlier and truer, —  
 Why should I love you the best?

Other lads, their eyes are bolder.  
 Young they are, and strong and slim, 10  
 Ned is straight and broad of shoulder,  
 Donald has a way with him,  
 David stands a head above you,  
 Dick's as brave as Lancelot, —  
 Why, ah why, then, should I love you? 15  
 Naturally, I do not.

## OGDEN NASH (1902— )

If you see the *New Yorker* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, you have doubtless enjoyed many times the humorous verse of Ogden Nash. Although now a resident of Baltimore, he was born in Rye, New York. After St. George's School, Newport, Rhode Island, he went to Harvard for one year. His writing certainly gives the impression that he has had long practice at it, and that he writes with the greatest ease. His name is particularly associated with a certain irregular prose-poetry rhythm, which, like a ride over a rough road in a springless wagon, shakes a laugh out of you at unexpected moments. The verses below appeared in the *New Yorker*.

## UNANSWERED BY REQUEST

There are several little things in life that keep me guessing,  
 And one of them is what are the French words for French leave and  
     French-fried potatoes and French dressing.  
 And I am also a trifle vague  
 About how you ask people to a Dutch treat or talk to them like a  
     Dutch uncle in The Hague.

And why do restaurants put signs in their windows advertising Real  
Home Cooking and expect the customers to come rushing in all  
panting and overjoyed 5  
When the reason that half the people who eat in restaurants are eat-  
ing in restaurants is because with home cooking they have become  
cloyed?  
And why does every Hollywood musical show have to have a gigantic  
close-up of the curly-headed crooner crooning directly at you in  
every reel,  
So all you can see is a smirk the size of his salary and an Adam's apple  
bobbing up and down like a ball on the nose of a trained seal?  
And do St. Louisans pronounce St. Louis St. Lewis or St. Louie,  
And whatever became of the investigation of Huey? 10  
And why are nine out of ten dance tunes as gay and sprightly as dirges,  
And in what part of the chin does a beard bide its time until it  
emerges?  
And are the people who applaud dancers who run across the stage and  
leap into each other's arms the same people who demand that all  
rye bread be infected with caraway,  
And why, considering the fact that there is so much more traffic on it,  
can you make better time on the primrose path than on the  
straight and naraway?  
And when is a violin a fiddle? 15  
And when the tide goes out here does it go in somewhere else or does  
it just pile up and make the ocean deeper in the middle?  
And who is the brownie whose duty it is to see that the theater curtain  
never goes up on time except the one evening that you are late?  
And who is the railroad dispatcher who arranges his dispatching so  
that every time you are about to see something interesting out of  
your train window your view is cut off by a hundred-car freight?  
All these moot questions and many others equally moot if not even  
mooter  
Must be faced by every thinking male and female practically as soon  
as they graduate from their kiddie kar or scooter, 20  
Because they are the kind of riddles and conundrums with which life  
Is far too too rife,  
But fortunately for the human race, thinking people eventually dis-  
cover that there is only one satisfactory way of dealing with a  
riddle or a conundrum,  
And that is to stop worrying about the answers and just get clean out  
from undrum.

FOR FURTHER READING OF LIGHT VERSE

- Adams, C. F., *Yawcob Strauss, and Other Poems*  
 Burdette, R. J., *Chimes from a Jester's Bells; Smiles Yoked with Sighs; The Silver Trumpets*  
 Burgess, Gelett, *The Rubaiyat of Omar Cayenne; The Gaze of Youth*  
 Carryl, C. E., *Davy and the Goblin; The Admiral's Caravan*  
 Carryl, G. W., *Fables for the Frivolous; Grimm Tales Made Gay; Mother Goose for Grown-Ups*  
 Hay, John, *Pike County Ballads*  
 Herford, Oliver, *A Kitten's Garden of Verse; The Rubáiyát of a Persian Kitten; Jingle Jungles*  
 Lanigan, G. T., *Canadian Ballads; Fables by G. Washington Aesop*  
 Leland, C. G., *Hans Breitmann's Ballads*  
 Montague, J. J., *More Truth than Poetry*  
 Preston, Keith, *Splinters; Pot Shots from Pegasus; Types of Pan*  
 Robinson, E. M., *Mere Melodies; Piping and Panning*  
 Roche, J. J., *Songs and Satires*  
 Russell, Irwin, *Christmas Night in the Quarters, and Other Poems*  
 Sherman, F. D., and Bangs, J. K., *New Waggings of Old Tales*  
 Stuart, R. McE., *Daddy-do-Funny*  
 Taylor, B. L., *Motley Measures; A Penny Whistle, together with the Babette Ballads*  
 Webb, C. H., *John Paul's Book; Parodies, Prose and Verse; Vagrom Verse*

Excellent humorous poems may be found among the *Collected Poems* of authors represented in other sections of this book, such as James Russell Lowell, James Whitcomb Riley, Eugene Field, and Christopher Morley, and also among the poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar, John G. Saxe, and Frank Dempster Sherman.

COLLECTIONS OF LIGHT VERSE

- Daly, T. A., *A Little Book of American Humorous Verse*  
 Duffield, publisher, *A Book of American Humor in Prose and Verse*  
 French, J. L., *Sixty Years of American Humor*  
 Herford, Oliver, *Poems from "Life"*  
 Knowles, F. L. (Paget, R. L.), *The Poetry of American Wit and Humor*  
 Matthews, Brander, *American Familiar Verse*  
 Morley, Christopher, *Bowling Green, an Anthology of Verse*  
 Preston, Keith, *Column Poets*  
 Stone & Co., publisher, *A Book of American Humorous Verse*  
 Wells, Carolyn, *A Nonsense Anthology; Such Nonsense!; A Whimsy Anthology; A Parody Anthology; A Satire Anthology; A Book of American Limericks; A Book of Humorous Verse; An Outline of Humor; Vers de Société Anthology*

## TYPES OF POETRY

Poetry falls naturally into three great classes: narrative, dramatic, and lyric. The first two both tell stories, narrative resembling the short story or novel in its method, dramatic being a play or at least a dialogue in verse. Lyric poetry expresses thought or feeling. Though it may suggest a story, it does not tell it outright.

## KINDS OF NARRATIVE POETRY

**The epic.** Narrative poetry has its subdivisions. The epic is a long narrative poem celebrating in dignified style the deeds of a hero. Among the European nations we find natural epics which grew up in the early days before printing, by word-of-mouth transmission from one bard to another. American literature has nothing of that kind, but we have a few literary epics in which a specific author composes a poem based on the legends previously existing. Thus Longfellow's *The Song of Hiawatha* is an epic of the Indians, and Neihardt's *The Song of Hugh Glass* of the hunters and trappers. Benét's *John Brown's Body* has epic qualities, but does not center about any one hero.

**Metrical tales.** Shorter narrative poems corresponding to the prose short story, and called variously metrical romances, metrical tales, or idylls, abound in American literature, especially in the works of Longfellow and Whittier. Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn* are probably the best-known examples. In this book Lowell's "The Vision of Sir Launfal" belongs to this class, though the preludes are distinctly lyrical. Benét's "The Mountain Whippoorwill" is also a metrical tale.

**Ballads.** Still shorter stories in verse with such marked singing quality that they are almost like lyrics are called ballads. Back in medieval times these grew up naturally like epics, and we may still see the process going on in our American folklore; but other ballads are definitely composed, such as Lowell's "The Courtin'" and Sill's "The Fool's Prayer." Typical "ballad measure" is the four-line stanza with alternate rhymes, and three or four beats to a line. Variations of this pattern are, of course, found, and some ballads, like Whittier's "Skipper Ireson's Ride," are in much longer stanzas.

**Dramatic poetry.** Dramatic poetry has never flourished in America. Longfellow's "The Spanish Student" was a failure, and few of the older authors even attempted the form. In modern poetry Edna Millay's *The King's Henchman* is almost unique in its vogue. Maxwell Anderson has introduced some blank verse into his historical plays. Sherwood Anderson and Archibald MacLeish have experimented with dramatic poetry for the radio.

## KINDS OF LYRIC POETRY

**The song.** Lyric poetry is the form which has made itself most felt in America. Certain classifications can be made, but there are always lyrics

which defy such labeling. The song is a simple little piece clearly intended for singing purposes. If of religious bent, it becomes a hymn. In this section you find Emerson's "The Concord Hymn," and Longfellow's "Hymn to the Night."

**Odes.** The ode is a sustained poem of exalted mood, often irregular in metrical form. Timrod's "Ode" in this section is too short to be typical. Probably the two most famous odes in American literature (not included here because of their length and difficulty) are Lowell's "Commemoration Ode" and Moody's "Ode in Time of Hesitation."

**The elegy and the epitaph.** The elegy is a mournful poem on death. Similar to it is the dirge, or funeral song. Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and Millay's "Dirge without Music" are examples. It is questionable whether poems with the welcoming attitude toward death of Lanier's "The Stirrup Cup" and Whitman's "The Carol of Death" could properly be called elegies. Frost's "The Death of the Hired Man" is an unusual type of elegy worked out through dialogue. Similar to the elegy and yet different is the epitaph, or inscription for the dead, of which Masters has made such surprising use in his *Spoon River Anthology*.

**The sonnet.** The sonnet is the most restricted metrical form, being limited to fourteen lines. In the so-called Italian form there is a break in the thought between the first eight and the last six lines (called the *octave* and the *sestet*), a five-accent line, and an intricate rhyme scheme. The Shakespearean form is more flexible, usually in alternate rhyme, with a couplet at the end to clinch the idea. Perhaps because of this very challenge to ingenuity, the sonnet has been a great favorite with poets of all ages. Examples included in this book are Longfellow's "In the Churchyard at Tarrytown" and Elinor Wylie's "Pretty Words." The sonnet is a favorite form of Edna St. Vincent Millay.

## METRICAL TERMS

**Meter.** Meter is an element of poetry which presents many possibilities of study. Of course, it is more important to enjoy the swing of a poem than to analyze it; but sometimes one has the same curiosity which prompts the small boy to take the clock apart to see what makes it tick. The meters described in the following pages may be called standard verse forms to distinguish them from free verse, which, as its name suggests, discards formal restrictions.

**"Feet": the trochee.** Lines of poetry are divided into "feet" with one accented syllable to every "foot." The marching of soldiers illustrates one of the common forms of measure. In starting his men out together the sergeant emphasizes the left foot thus: "LEFT, right, LEFT, right," or perhaps just "LEFT . . . LEFT . . . LEFT" omitting the unaccented syllable entirely. An example of this kind of meter is found in Sara Teasdale's "Barter":



"Life has loveliness to sell —  
 Music like a curve of gold,  
 Scent of pine trees in the rain,  
 Eyes that love you, arms that hold,"

There is a vigorous swing to this type of foot suggesting life and action. It is called the trochee, or trochaic foot.

**The iambic foot.** The reverse of this is the iambus, or iambic foot, in which the unaccented syllable comes first, followed by the accented syllable. Holmes's "Old Ironsides" illustrates it:

"Oh, better that her shattered hulk  
 Should sink beneath the wave;  
 Her thunders shook the mighty deep,  
 And there should be her grave."

This is the most commonly used foot in English poetry.

**The dactyl and the anapest.** Because of the alternate accents, the iambus and the trochee are marching feet, but there are others which are dancing feet. Could you imagine soldiers marching to waltz time? It couldn't be done. ONE, two, three, ONE, two, three. They would have to dance to it. By a queer twist of anatomy this foot is really a finger, for the Greeks called it a dactyl, or finger, because of the three bones in that part of the hand the first is long, the second and third short. When they wanted to reverse the accent and make it: one, two, THREE, one, two, THREE, they called it an anapest, which means striking back. In English poetry the dactyl is seldom found all by itself. Longfellow's *Evangeline* is one of the rare examples of prevailing dactylic measure:

"This is the forest primeval; but where are the hearts that beneath it  
 Leaped like the roe, when it hears in the woodland the voice of the hunts-  
 man?"

Either the dactyl or the anapest, however, mixed with other feet, is frequently used in poems about rides, to simulate horses' hoofbeats. Thus we find the three syllable foot in "Paul Revere's Ride," "The Deacon's Masterpiece," "Sheridan's Ride," and in the English poems, "The Charge of the Light Brigade" and "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." The anapest is more likely to be found in its pure form, as in Poe's "Ulalume":

"It was night in the lonesome October  
 Of my most immemorial year."

**Various verse forms.** In all but the most singsong of verse we come across variations in the prevailing form of foot. The poet is governed by the higher laws of his sensitive ear, rather than by the mechanical laws of

mathematics. There must, however, be a real swing evident in the variations, else the lines mark the amateur poet by their "limping feet."

Sometimes we wish to indicate the number of feet to a line, and the ancient Greeks have again supplied us with some technical terms: one foot, *monometer*; two feet, *dimeter*; three, *trimeter*; four, *tetrameter*; five, *pentameter*; six, *hexameter*; seven, *heptameter*; eight, *octameter*. Fortunately for our memories, these terms, with the exception of pentameter, are seldom used.

"Iambic pentameter," however, is such a common term that we need to understand that, if no other. This dignified five-foot line is the basis of the sonnet, of blank verse (meaning unrhymed verse, not to be confused with free verse), and of many stanza forms. Bryant's "Thanatopsis" and Frost's "Birches" are examples of blank verse. Robinson's "Richard Cory" shows a four-line stanza in iambic pentameter. Tetrameter is more often used than called by name. Millay's "Autumn Daybreak" is in iambic tetrameter; *Hiawatha* is in unrhymed trochaic tetrameter. Ballad measure alternates tetrameter and trimeter in a four-line stanza as in Whittier's "The Eternal Goodness." Longfellow is almost unique among our poets for his use of the long and difficult hexameter, as in *Evangeline* and *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

Knowledge of these matters is interesting and valuable after we have come to know and enjoy the poetry itself; but it can never be said to create a love for poetry, or in itself to make a poet. To illustrate this point read Masters's "Petit the Poet" in *Spoon River Anthology*.

## FIGURES OF SPEECH

A figure of speech appeals directly to the imagination to create a mental picture or enrich an idea. It may use a concrete object to illuminate in a flash an abstract idea. It may employ the familiar experience as a guide to the unmapped realm of new experience. It may create an emotional reaction by associating ideas in fresh and vivid combinations.

It is more important to grasp the underlying significance of a figure of speech than to call it by a technical name; but since names are convenient handles in discussion, definitions of the most commonly found figures are here given. The illustrative examples are all from poems in this book. Figures, of course, are frequently used in prose, and supply the flavor to everyday conversation, particularly in the mood of humorous slang. But since figures are an especial part of the poet's working kit, we define them in this section.

The basis of the most frequently used figures in English is comparison between two things which are quite unlike in general but have some point of resemblance.

**Simile:** a comparison expressed by *like*, *as*, *such as*, *than*, or similar connecting word.

"One by one, like leaves from a tree,  
All my faiths have forsaken me." — "Leaves "

"And the women he draws from one model don't vary,  
All sappy as maples and flat as a prairie." — "A Fable for Critics "

**Metaphor:** a comparison assumed or implied.

"Here in the autumn of his days he came,  
But the dry leaves of life were all aflame  
With tints that brightened and were multiplied."  
— "In the Churchyard at Tarrytown "

"The harpies of the shore shall pluck  
The eagle of the sea." — "Old Ironsides "

**Allegory:** a comparison extended to considerable length.

"The Chambered Nautilus," "The Cowboy's Dream," "The Purse  
Seine."

**Personification:** a comparison of an object, an animal, or an idea to a human being by giving it either human emotions or speech.

"Error wounded, writhes in pain  
And dies among his worshippers." — "The Battlefield "

"When duty whispers low, *Thou must*,  
The youth replies, *I can*." — "Voluntaries III "

**Apostrophe:** a direct address to an idea or object as if it were a person; also to the dead or unborn as if living.

"O holy Night! from thee I learn to bear  
What man has borne before." — "Hymn to the Night "

"Brother, that breathe the August air  
Ten thousand years from now . . .  
I cannot think your thoughts will be  
Much different from mine." — "If Still Your Orchards Bear "

**Hyperbole:** an obvious exaggeration to produce a definite effect, such as impressiveness, terror, or humor.

"Here once the embattled farmers stood  
And fired the shot heard round the world." — "The Concord Hymn "

"Ten days and nights, with sleepless eye  
I watched that wretched man,  
And since, I never dare to write  
As funny as I can." — "The Height of the Ridiculous "



## DRAMA

### *A Short History of American Drama*

#### BEGINNINGS OF AMERICAN DRAMA: BEFORE 1800

**The early American theater.** When we think how busy the early Americans were with clearing a wilderness and building a nation, it is a wonder not that the early theater was slow in developing but that it existed at all. The early playhouse was a poor structure; it could not afford to be otherwise, for the torches and candles that lighted it often caused destructive fires. As a fire menace, the building was usually banished from the center of town; and a sea of mud in the unpaved streets often set another barrier between the playgoer and his entertainment. An early dramatic critic in New York suggests some of the difficulties encountered inside the theater when he remarks that one evening in 1795 a box full of Indians vied with the play for the attention of the audience, and that another play suffered because the audience spent most of the fifth act trying to decide whether to investigate a fire alarm that clearly penetrated the thin walls or to settle down and see the play out.

Yet, in spite of the many obstacles, before the Revolution the theater had managed to get a foothold at Williamsburg, Charleston, Philadelphia, and New York. Farther north it met the antagonism of the Puritans, who considered plays not only immoral but wickedly ex-

travagant. Even in New England, though, the old human love of the playhouse triumphed, and before the end of the century Boston was going to plays. The plays were English, as was most of the literature read in the colonies, and, except for a few amateur performances in college, the actors were members of touring English companies.

**First American plays.** Until after 1800 the attitude of the public toward American authors was discouraging. The habit of looking to Europe for literature of real importance was so strong that even William Dunlap, who came later to be called "The Father of the American Drama," did not dare acknowledge his early plays lest the fact that an American wrote them should keep the public away.

Considering this discouraging attitude, it was a real triumph for *The Prince of Parthia* to be presented in Philadelphia in 1767 and advertised as the work of "the late ingenious Mr. Thomas Godfrey, of this city." This play was the first written by an American to receive professional production in this country. It echoes Shakespeare in many passages, and it has a melodramatic plot with a faultless hero, a wicked villain, and much bloodshed; but still it compares favorably with any drama produced in England during its century. It was found quite actable when a dramatic society at the University of Pennsylvania in 1915 gave it its only other recorded performance.

During the Revolutionary period a number of satires and farces appeared to support both sides of the struggle, but they possessed neither merit nor permanent interest to keep them alive when the war was over. The Revolution did not stimulate drama. It only used drama as a weapon.

The second important American play was Royall Tyler's comedy, *The Contrast*, produced in New York in 1787. This patriotic comparison of simple American virtues with the follies and vices that fashionable society imported from Europe was not only a play written by an American and produced in America; it was also about contemporary America, and it introduced to the boards for the first time a character destined to be the most popular and most typical counterpart of the new nation — the Yankee. With only slight variations he lived in the theater for over a century. Essentially the character is an unsophisticated but shrewd man embodying all the resourcefulness and firm principle the American frontiersman prided himself on. The audience laughed at the Yankee for being green, and it laughed with him to see his native good sense triumph over cunning and evil. The tremendously popular "Uncle Josh" in *The Old Homestead* (illustrated on page 766) belongs to the tribe of stage Yankees. Even so recent

a figure as Will Rogers owed much of his popularity to the same traits that made the old-time Yankee the favorite he was.

Just at the end of the eighteenth century there was a noteworthy attempt at heroic tragedy with an American subject, William Dunlap's *André* (1798). The play shows Washington struggling with great difficulties to further the American cause and sadly sentencing André to death for his part in the Benedict Arnold conspiracy, even though the young officer was personally popular with Americans as well as British. Dunlap was a greater manager and historian than dramatist, and the play has many faults, but his attempt to deal honestly with genuine American material deserves recognition.

#### THE GROWING AMERICAN DRAMA:

1800-1860

The first half of the nineteenth century saw no great drama produced in America. Two distinct types made up the bulk of the plays presented: sentimental and melodramatic comedies, and high-flown and melodramatic blank verse tragedies. Favorite situations used over and over seldom bore much resemblance to real life. For instance, the reunion of long-separated relatives was so popular that even the uncritical audiences of the day came to realize that any long-lost son or brother mentioned early in a play was sure to turn up in time to save the day and take his bow at the final curtain.

One picturesque feature of this period was the companies that lived and performed on the Mississippi River boats. A good presentation of this phase of our theatrical development may be found in Edna Ferber's well-known novel, *Show Boat*.

**Reflection of foreign influence.** On the whole, America reflected the dramatic taste and talent across the Atlantic. The comedies sometimes had an American background; but the tragedies were always laid in remote lands, France, Spain, and Italy being the favorites. The false sentimentality and melodramatic situations that held the stage were often transplanted or adapted from foreign plays. William Dunlap, during the latter part of his career, made many adaptations from the drama of France and Germany; and John Howard Payne, whose "Home, Sweet Home" was originally a song in one of his plays, translated more plays from Europe than he wrote himself. Even the plays of American authorship were usually about European characters or scenes, as the quaint subtitles of two of Payne's own

dramas reveal — *Therese, or the Orphan of Geneva*, and *Clari, or the Maid of Milan*.

The strongest influence on drama in this period came not from dramatists but from a group of great actors who reigned over the stage. Men like Edwin Forrest were interested not in picturing real life but in having strong emotional roles in which to display their acting powers. Their taste greatly strengthened the vogue of heroic plays with foreign scenes. Robert Montgomery Bird's *The Gladiator* (1831), a story of Rome in the days of Pompey, is typical of these plays. The best of all the romantic blank-verse tragedies was George Henry Boker's *Francesca da Rimini* (1855), a version of one of the great tragic love stories of all time.

**Incidental reflections of American life.** Reflections of American life were rare in these plays, and reflections of American thought only incidental. But three kinds did exist.

The use of the Yankee type to solve the difficulties in the comedies was one. We have an example in the best social comedy of the period, Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt Ritchie's *Fashion* (1845), showing a shrewd and unsophisticated countryman more than a match for the pretensions of high society.

A second American touch in the comedies was the fondness for picturing the rise and triumph of a hero with neither money nor position to help him at the beginning. In a great old favorite, *Tears and Smiles* (1807), James Nelson Barker showed this typically American hero in his usual role, as a suitor opposed by a wealthy rival. Father favored the wealthy suitor and daughter the poor one, and the advancing play showed the daughter to be a better judge of character than her father. Thus the stage, in its own way, proclaimed equal opportunities for all.

The third reflection of American ideas occurred in various speeches in the heroic plays with foreign background. In *The Gladiator* the hero uttered stirring denunciations of slavery, speeches inspired more by the rising tide of abolitionist feeling in America than by the slavery of ancient Rome. In *Francesca da Rimini* a jester bitterly attacked the injustices of hereditary aristocracy. Sentiments in such harmony with the rampant democracy of the young nation always brought a cheer from the audience.

**Two lasting favorites.** Two other great popular successes of this early period deserve mention, even though both originated outside the theater — *Rip Van Winkle*, adapted from Washington Irving's story and played with great success by the popular Joseph Jefferson (illustrated on page 766), and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, a stage

version of Harriet Beecher Stowe's attack on slavery. The lovable character of Rip made that play a great favorite with actors as well as audiences, and the unsurpassed melodramatic effects of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* keep it to this day in the repertory of traveling companies. Small wonder that it was a phenomenal favorite in the early days when melodrama was the most popular ingredient of drama.

#### THE MATURING DRAMA: 1860-1915

The years between the War between the States and the World War saw a constant increase of realism and of technical skill in the American drama. Critics like William Dean Howells encouraged more faithful reflection of life in plays as well as in novels, and dramatists of influence and originality arose to shape the product of the theater.

Four men particularly advanced the drama between 1860 and 1900. Augustin Daly (1839-1899), who was a manager as well as a dramatist, built up good traveling stock companies, included in their repertory the best classics, and in selecting new plays encouraged native talents and subjects. Bronson Howard (1842-1900), one of the American dramatists whom Daly was the first to recognize, simplified and improved dramatic technique. Steele MacKaye (1842-1894), besides writing plays, introduced and taught a new realistic type of acting which soon replaced the violently exaggerated heroics of actors with a more natural and more impressive manner. MacKaye introduced more realistic stage settings and such comforts as hinged, cushioned seats and the first ventilating system. Finally, in the nineties, James A. Herne (1839-1901), a playwright who got his start with a sensationally successful melodrama, brought out two serious realistic plays. Neither was very successful in its own day, but they are now recognized as the beginning of realism in the modern American theater.

During the nineties the flourishing road-show business was seriously threatened by the formation of a syndicate designed to set up a monopoly of theaters. By leasing nearly all the good playhouses, the men behind the syndicate planned to shut out rival companies. The hero of the fight was David Belasco, who presented his plays in all sorts of buildings to dramatize the struggle before the public; and the heroine was Minnie Maddern Fiske, a great actress, who played in tents and barns to reach her audience. The syndicate had to give up its plan of monopolizing the dramatic entertainment of the provinces.



**Local color: Belasco and Thomas.** Around 1890 the local-color movement reached the theater. The interesting peculiarities of different parts of the country had already inspired many short stories, and soon plays began to capitalize on the interest. David Belasco (1853-1931), early in his long career, put the romantic West on the stage in plays like *The Girl of the Golden West* and *The Girl I Left Behind Me*. Augustus Thomas (1859-1934) announced his intention of writing a play about every state in the union and actually produced four of the series — *Alabama*, *Arizona*, *Colorado*, and *In Missouri*. Then he was attracted to newer types, with which he had greater success. It is significant that he grew up in Missouri, and that the last-named of these four plays is the only one of the list to enjoy lasting esteem. Even though interest in the American scene inspired and supported the local-color movement, the plays were more romantic than realistic.

**Social comedy: Clyde Fitch.** More lasting and more interesting than the local-color plays were the social comedies of the nineties, shown at their best in the work of Clyde Fitch (1865-1909). This genial gentleman, who knew at first hand the society he pictured in his greatest successes, wrote some "period" plays, such as *Beau Brummel* and *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines* (illustrated on page 766), some historical plays, such as *Nathan Hale*, and some pure melodrama, such as *The Cowboy and the Lady*. However, he earned his high place in American letters with his dramatic studies of character and activities in fashionable society. Though a master of plot, he was never content with just an entertaining story. Along with the gaiety and frivolity he revealed the financial complications on which society rested, the crumbling of character before the desire for money. His greatest plays were studies of the influence on character of warped traits in personality, of jealousy in *The Girl with the Green Eyes* and of petty lying in *The Truth*. Fitch took little part in the growing argument about realism except to write one strong, unpleasant play, *The City*, to prove that he could be realistic if he chose. But his accurate, keen understanding of society about him produced many realistic qualities in his plays, and his dramatic skill won him deserved honor as one of America's greatest dramatists.

**Realism triumphant: problem plays.** After 1900 realism dominated the theater, and a host of "problem plays" occupied the entertainment field. David Belasco, always sensitive to the trend of public interest, wrote *The Return of Peter Grimm*, with spiritualism for its theme. Augustus Thomas, after leaving his local-color series

to write a few social comedies, produced *As a Man Thinks*, dealing with race prejudice and the double standard of morality, and his best play, *The Witching Hour*, on mental telepathy and responsibility for crime. William Vaughn Moody, poet and scholar, won wide acclaim for his serious study of contrasting attitudes toward life, *The Great Divide* (1906). Edward Sheldon examined the relations between politics and crooked business in *The Boss* (1911). The American drama had come a long way from *The Gladiator* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

### MODERN AMERICAN DRAMA

The drama today is not merely varied; it is a mass of contradictions. We have sordid naturalism, and we have the heroic tragedy in blank verse. We have musical comedies about presidential campaigns, and we have folk plays about the Negro's conception of heaven. We have fantasy and melodrama, realism, romance, what-have-you. We have plays staged with many elaborate scenes changed in a bare moment of darkness, thanks to modern electrical engineering, and we have plays staged without even a backdrop to supplement the spotlight. Full-length plays display a wide range of act and scene arrangements, and the one-act play flourishes. The radio has opened a whole new field of drama. What definite trends will emerge from this helter-skelter no one can say. But true and certain it is that we have the most gifted group of men writing for the stage that America has yet seen — and that there is no telling what they will write next.

Even Eugene O'Neill, who undoubtedly stands at the head of the list, has contributed his surprise. Just when the public had him firmly associated with the powerful, somber tragedies he had presented for fifteen years, he wrote *Ah Wilderness!* — a humorous yet tender account of a boy's growing pains and his father's sympathetic understanding. (See page 728 for a full discussion of his life and works.)

Maxwell Anderson, usually considered second only to O'Neill, made his first great hit with *What Price Glory*, a rowdy, brutal war play (written with Lawrence Stallings). He won a Pulitzer Prize with *Both Your Houses*, a satirical comedy on political swapping-out in Washington. He has written impressive blank-verse historical plays on Queen Elizabeth, on Mary of Scotland, and on Washington at Valley Forge. He has written a modern tragedy in *Winterset* and a fantastic play of the 1890's, *The Star-Wagon*. Not an easy man to sum up in a phrase, this Maxwell Anderson.

George Kelly and Sidney Howard have run fairly true to form.

Besides writing some of the best dialogue on our stage, Kelly is esteemed as one of the keenest observers of human character. He has portrayed in *The Show-Off* the man who talks and acts always for the effect on others, and in *Craig's Wife* the woman who cares more for her house than for her husband. Howard added another memorable portrait to the gallery with *The Silver Cord*, about a mother who could not bear to have her sons get out from under her control.

The cleverest writer of social comedy in our day is Philip Barry, who can be sparkingly light, yet who often gets quite serious. Barry's greatest successes have been *Paris-Bound*, in which a divorce is narrowly averted, and *Holiday*, in which a young man insists on having his fun while he is young instead of spending his youth making money.

In Robert Sherwood and George Kaufman we have two versatile dramatists who are always clever and always entertaining, and who are otherwise as unpredictable as the theater for which they write. Sherwood turned out two brilliant melodramas with a suspicion of modern seriousness, *Idiot's Delight* and *The Petrified Forest*, before winning a Pulitzer Prize in 1939 for *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, a play as scholarly as it is moving. Kaufman has more white rabbits in his hat than any of the others. He has produced, often in collaboration with other writers, such widely different plays as the political musical comedy *Of Thee I Sing*, that old favorite *Dulcy* (the beautiful dumbbell, illustrated on page 766), *Dinner at Eight*, *The Royal Family*, *First Lady*, *You Can't Take It with You*, and *Merrily We Roll Along*. No other name in bright lights above a theater entrance is such good guarantee of an entertaining evening as Kaufman's, for his dialogue is always keen and bright and his plots are always brisk and smooth.

Marc Connelly, who collaborated with Kaufman on many of his early hits, has one of the most popular plays of recent years to his credit, *Green Pastures*. This paraphrase of Biblical stories as told by a Negro preacher has paradoxically remained devout and impressive, even while it provokes smiles, and the old Negro who played the part of "De Lawd" was one of the most respected and admired figures in the theater during the phenomenal run of the play.

Two serious playwrights are Elmer Rice and Clifford Odets, who express in dramatic form their concern for struggling humanity. In *Street Scene* and *The Adding Machine* Rice has voiced his pessimism about the present life and future prospects of the lowly who labor. Odets, the most important dramatist to emerge in the past ten years, attacks more directly the enemies of human happiness in *Till the Day I Die*, a bitter picture of Nazi Germany; *Waiting for Lefty*, a stirring

account of the events that lead to a strike; and *Golden Boy*, a prize-fighter story that you may have seen in the movies.

Paul Green, another Pulitzer Prize winner, has written of his native North Carolina, but he speaks for no one class. In *Abraham's Bosom* studies sympathetically the plight of a Negro wishing to better his condition; *The House of Connelly* follows the decay of a once-aristocratic family; *The Field God* concerns ordinary farmers; and *Johnny Johnson* makes a small-town businessman into a soldier and an enemy of war.

William Saroyan, a young man whose first reputation was based on his innovations in short-story technique, has demonstrated his power to carry over his originality into the drama by two Broadway successes of 1940, for one of which, *The Time of Your Life*, he was given the Pulitzer Prize in drama.

Notable among recent plays that break away from the old dramatic forms is *Our Town*, by Thornton Wilder, whose first reputation came from his novels. He may become even more distinguished as a dramatist. You will read the play in this book and see for yourself how different the new plays can be from the old ones.

It is clear that America has all kinds of drama today. Such vigor and variety may indicate that we are approaching the "golden age" of American drama. Should this be true, each of you may have a share in it, if not as writer or actor, at least as audience. That is a real share, for no great art ever flourishes without an intelligent and appreciative following.

## *A Guide to Drama*

A DRAMA is any composition in prose or poetry which through dialogue and action tells a story. When action alone is employed, it is called pantomime. That thriving new branch of drama, the radio play, uses dialogue alone. If the lines are sung, a drama becomes opera. Ordinarily, however, the term "drama" is used for any production on the stage or screen in which actors present the words and deeds of the author's characters so as to create the impression that the story is actually taking place before the audience.

**Types of the drama.** In studying the drama it is helpful to be able to distinguish the various kinds of plays. From the classic Greek stage, which had only two distinct types of plays, drama inherited the

**The problem of place.** Having to present his entire story on one stage makes the problem of place especially important to the dramatist. In the forty years just behind us dramatists focused their skill on bringing all the action to one place, or at most two or three, which staging could represent successfully for each act. Today this tyranny of mere place is being challenged and dramatists move about from scene to scene, inspired perhaps by the flexibility of the motion picture. Sometimes they achieve the change of scene by a revolving stage and present a succession of scenes in accurate detail. Or they may use the barest suggestion of actual stage setting and call on the imagination of the audience to move with the action from place to place. One certainty remains. Whether the dramatist is trying to collect the action in one place or is trying to create an illusion that the same stage is successively many different places, his success in meeting the problem furnishes one of the most interesting clues to his dramatic technique. If he tries to collect the action, he has to exert his ingenuity to gather his characters. That is why house parties were so popular in plays that held firmly to the three-act tradition. If he wants the audience to believe that the same stage is a number of different places within a short time, even greater skill in writing (another job for the dialogue!) is required to make the illusion convincing. Shakespeare's poetry could make an audience watching a bare stage exposed to the full afternoon sun feel that they were in Juliet's moonlit garden. The modern experimental dramatist seldom breaks into lyrical description; but if he would preserve the illusion of reality, he must see to it that the dialogue makes up for any skimpiness of staging.

In checking up on the dramatist's handling of the problem of place you may ask, if he presents most of the action in one place: Does he select a place where most of the characters would naturally be gathered? Does he furnish adequate reason for the presence of each one? If he has given you many short scenes, you may ask: Is the arrangement of scenes a series of logical shifts in location of the happenings, so that your interest leads you from one to the other? Does each scene create some suspense to lead you naturally to the next? Are you sufficiently informed, by stage setting or by dialogue, of the change in location, so that you move easily with the action from one scene to another?

You will find in this book one play (*Where the Cross Is Made*) where the dramatist selects one place for all the action of his story, and another (*Our Town*) where the dramatist changes scene at will

with little pretense at stage setting. You can soon realize that each method demands considerable skill of the playwright.

**The problem of time.** Having to condense his entire story into a few hours creates another problem for the dramatist, although not such a serious one as that of place. The old tradition called for three, or at most four, continuous slices of action, with only the gaps between acts or an occasional briefly lowered curtain to indicate the passage of time. The playwright working in that system had to exert his powers to keep the action continuous, yet properly spaced and never dull. When he had to kill the time between two important parts of the action, he was aided by the common illusion of the theater that time is passing much more swiftly than the clock measures it. An audience will readily believe that half an hour elapses, while the play actually goes on for only ten or fifteen minutes. The modern experimental playwright can cut his action up into the smaller episodes that have real importance, and so avoid filling the gaps, but he must run the risk of breaking the illusion of reality between episodes. He must exercise his skill in knitting together his various incidents so that the audience follows him from one to another with no sense of interruption.

You will find that the questions that test the dramatist's handling of place frequently involve the successful handling of time. But you may also ask of plays in the three-act tradition: Is each act a smooth succession of incidents important to the play, or does the dramatist sometimes have to put in an interlude? If he has to fill in between two really important sections, does he give that bit of action and dialogue enough interest to keep up the tone of the play? The episodic play must meet other tests: Is the lapse of time between scenes indicated clearly enough by the dialogue for you to realize without effort the time relation between scenes? Does the dramatist make you feel that each scene is really the next important happening in the story he is telling, that he is skipping nothing you need to keep up with the story?

The same two plays that illustrate two contrasting methods of handling place will give you an opportunity to examine the effectiveness of the continuous play and of the episodic play, each handled by a master of his craft.

**Getting the idea over.** The drama is the only literary type in which the author has no opportunity to tell his ideas directly to a reader. In the short story, the novel, the essay, poetry, a writer can make comments that insure getting his own point of view clearly be-

fore his reader. But in the drama only the characters talk; and if the author wants to make sure that his own ideas carry over effectively, he must use those characters to make the impression. Sometimes he leaves the whole responsibility to the total effect of the action and dialogue. Sometimes he uses a character, called a commentator, to point out the significance of the happenings. Sometimes one remark in the dialogue sums up the main point the dramatist is making in the play. Such a remark is called a "tag." Because all effects in the drama must be immediately clear, you will probably recognize a "tag" as soon as you come to it. Do not expect one in every play, for action and conversation may be sufficient to present effectively the idea on which the play rests. The only requirement is that the dramatist must use these limited means so as to make that idea clear to his audience — or his reader.

### EUGENE O'NEILL (1888— )

Among the many able American playwrights of the present century, Eugene O'Neill by common consent holds first place. His profoundly moving and highly individualized dramas have won him a wide audience in many European countries as well as in his own and gained for him in 1936 the international Nobel Prize for literature. He it was who made the first effective attacks on the rigidly patterned drama that held our stage until 1920. His audiences may be puzzled by some of his attempts to probe beneath the surface of human life, but they are always moved by his intensity and force.

Three elements combined to shape O'Neill's genius. From childhood he knew the theater well, for his father, James O'Neill, was a great actor and his son had often seen him play and had for a time been a member of his company. The elder O'Neill played the leading role for sixteen years in *The Count of Monte Cristo* (illustrated on page 766), a great thriller rather than a profound drama. Behind the innovations of Eugene O'Neill's plays lies a sound knowledge of theatrical effectiveness. The second strong influence on O'Neill's development was two years of rough-and-ready life at sea and along water fronts in New York and Buenos Aires. He had tried a year at Princeton and a job in New York, but the beaten path suited him no better in his private life than it did on the stage. His seafaring days furnished him with the originals of many of the characters who later peopled his plays. The third stage of his development came during a period of enforced quiet living while he was in a sanatorium recuperating from an attack of tuberculosis. Lying quiet for hours, with

only mental exercise permitted, he came to the conclusion that he wanted to write plays. He was already equipped with knowledge of both tools and materials for drama. After his recovery he entered Professor Baker's famous playwriting course at Harvard and entered seriously upon his career as a dramatist.

The Provincetown Players take great pride in having given O'Neill's work its first stage presentation. They produced a number of his one-act plays, based largely upon his experiences at sea. His work brought the one-act form to an artistic level never before attained in this country. Of these plays the best known are *The Moon of the Caribbees*, *Ile*, *In the Zone*, *Bound East for Cardiff*, and the one here reprinted, *Where the Cross Is Made*. In 1920 O'Neill reached Broadway with *Beyond the Horizon*, which won the first of the three Pulitzer prizes to his credit. This play was cast in the familiar three-act pattern which he deserted in most of his later work, but it shared with his other plays a tragic view of life in which fate and human failings are powerfully blended. In his next play, *The Emperor Jones* (1920), he deserted the old pattern for a series of shorter scenes, and introduced to a stage dominated by careful realism fantastic representations of fears and hallucinations. *The Emperor Jones* has been produced many times, as a play and as an opera, and has already achieved the standing of a classic.

Of the series of plays which O'Neill wrote during the twenties, *The Hairy Ape* (1922) is probably the clearest statement of a theme that constantly engaged the dramatist's interest: the loneliness and defeat of an individual striving desperately to "belong" to a world in which he is not considered important. Of his technical innovations the most interesting are the use of masks in *The Great God Brown* (1926) to represent the self the world sees rather than the real person, and the use of dialogue to represent the thoughts as well as the spoken words of the characters in *Strange Interlude* (1928).

Relaxing from his earlier intensity, O'Neill wrote in 1933 a comedy in a new and gentle vein, *Ah Wilderness!* Stage presentations in many different cities and an excellent screen version have enabled it to reach an exceptionally wide audience. Whether this sympathetically humorous story of an adolescent boy and his father forecasts a new strain of development or is a mere side excursion, it sheds valuable light on the flexibility of O'Neill's powers and increases the profound interest with which the public awaits other plays from his pen.

## WHERE THE CROSS IS MADE

O'Neill has told this story as a three-act play under the title *Gold*, a title that may give you a quicker understanding of the central idea. O'Neill himself says of *Where the Cross Is Made*, "It was great fun to



write. theatrically very thrilling," and disclaims any more serious interest in the play. Others have called it melodramatic, in the sense that it is exciting rather than significant. Read it, then, just as an exciting episode in the lives of these particular people, not as a revelation of typical life or of any hidden truth about human nature.

## CHARACTERS

CAPTAIN ISAIAH BARTLETT

NAT BARTLETT, his son

SUE BARTLETT, his daughter

DOCTOR HIGGINS

SILAS HORNE, mate

CATES, bosun

JIMMY KANAKA, harpooner

} of the schooner *Mary Allen*

SCENE. CAPTAIN BARTLETT'S "cabin" — *a room erected as a lookout post at the top of his house, situated on a high point of land on the California coast. The inside of the compartment is fitted up like the captain's cabin of a deep-sea sailing vessel. On the left, forward, a porthole. Farther back the stairs of the companionway. Still farther two more portholes. In the rear, left, a marble-topped sideboard with a ship's lantern on it. In the rear, center, a door opening on stairs which lead to the lower house. A cot with a blanket is placed against the wall to the right of the door. In the right wall five portholes. Directly under them a wooden bench. In front of the bench a long table with two straight-backed chairs, one in front, the other to the left of it. A cheap, dark-colored rug is on the floor. In the ceiling, midway from front to rear, a skylight, extending from opposite the door to above the left edge of the table. In the right extremity of the skylight is placed a floating ship's compass. The light from the binnacle sheds over this from above and seeps down into the room, casting a vague globular shadow of the compass on the floor.*

*The time is an early hour of a clear windy night in the fall of the year 1900. Moonlight, winnowed by the wind which moans in the stubborn angles of the old house, creeps wearily in through the portholes, and rests like tired dust in circular patches upon the floor and table. An insistent monotone of thundering surf, muffled and far off, is borne upward from the beach below.*

*After the curtain rises, the door in the rear is opened slowly and the head and shoulders of NAT BARTLETT appear over the sill. He casts a*

quick glance about the room and, seeing no one there, ascends the remaining steps and enters. He makes a sign to someone in the darkness beneath: "All right, Doctor." DOCTOR HIGGINS follows him into the room and, closing the door, stands looking with great curiosity around him. He is a slight, medium-sized, professional-looking man of about thirty-five. NAT BARTLETT is very tall, gaunt, and loose-framed. His right arm has been amputated at the shoulder, and the sleeve on that side of the heavy mackinaw he wears hangs flabbily or flaps against his body as he moves. He appears much older than his thirty years. His shoulders have a weary stoop as if worn down by the burden of his massive head with its heavy shock of tangled black hair. His face is long, bony, and sallow, with deep-set black eyes, a large aquiline nose, a wide, thin-lipped mouth shadowed by an unkempt bristle of mustache. His voice is low and deep with a penetrating, hollow, metallic quality. In addition to the mackinaw he wears corduroy trousers stuffed down into high laced boots.

Nat. Can you see, Doctor?

Higgins (*in the too-casual tones which betray an inward uneasiness*). Yes — perfectly — don't trouble. The moonlight is so bright —

Nat. Luckily. (*Walking slowly toward the table*) He doesn't want any light — lately — only the one from the binnacle there.

Higgins. He? Ah — you mean your father?

Nat (*impatiently*). Who else?

Higgins (*a bit startled — gazing around him in embarrassment*). I suppose this is all meant to be like a ship's cabin?

Nat. Yes — as I warned you.

Higgins (*in surprise*). Warned me? Why, warned? I think it's very natural — and interesting — this whim of his.

Nat (*meaningly*). Interesting, it may be.

Higgins. And he lives up here, you said — never comes down?

Nat. Never — for the past three years. My sister brings his food up to him. (*He sits down in the chair to the left of the table.*) There's a lantern on the sideboard there, Doctor. Bring it over and sit down. We'll make a light. I'll ask your pardon for bringing you to this room on the roof — but — no one'll hear us here; and by seeing for yourself the mad way he lives — Understand that I want you to get all the facts — just that, facts! — and for that, light is necessary. Without that — they become dreams up here — dreams, Doctor.

*Higgins (with a relieved smile carries over the lantern).* It is a trifle spooky.

*Nat (not seeming to notice this remark).* He won't take any note of this light. His eyes are too busy — out there. (*He flings his left arm in a wide gesture seaward.*) And if he does notice — well, let him come down. You're bound to see him sooner or later. (*He scratches a match and lights the lantern.*)

*Higgins.* Where is — he?

*Nat (pointing upward).* Up on the poop. Sit down, man! He'll not come — yet awhile.

*Higgins (sitting gingerly on the chair in front of table).* Then he has the roof, too, rigged up like a ship?

*Nat.* I told you he had. Like a deck, yes. A wheel, compass, binnacle light, the companionway there (*He points.*), a bridge to pace up and down on — *and keep watch.* If the wind wasn't so high you'd hear him now — back and forth — all the livelong night. (*With a sudden harshness*) Didn't I tell you he's mad?

*Higgins (with a professional air).* That was nothing new. I've heard that about him from all sides since I first came to the asylum yonder. You say he only walks at night — up there?

*Nat.* Only at night, yes. (*Grimly*) The things he wants to see can't be made out in daylight — dreams and such.

*Higgins.* But just what is he trying to see? Does anyone know? Does he tell?

*Nat (impatiently).* Why, everyone knows what Father looks for, man! The ship, of course.

*Higgins.* What ship?

*Nat.* His ship — the *Mary Allen* — named for my dead mother.

*Higgins.* But — I don't understand — Is the ship long overdue — or what?

*Nat.* Lost in a hurricane off the Celebes with all on board — three years ago!

*Higgins (wonderingly).* Ah. (*After a pause*) But your father still clings to a doubt —

*Nat.* There is no doubt for him or anyone else to cling to. She was sighted bottom up, a complete wreck, by the whaler *John Slocum*. That was two weeks after the storm. They sent a boat out to read her name.

*Higgins.* And hasn't your father ever heard —

*Nat.* He was the first to hear, naturally. Oh, he *knows* right enough, if that's what you're driving at. (*He bends toward the doctor*

— *intensely*.) He *knows*, Doctor, he *knows* — but he won't *believe*. He can't — and keep living.

Higgins (*impatiently*). Come, Mr. Bartlett, let's get down to brass tacks. You didn't drag me up here to make things more obscure, did you? Let's have the facts you spoke of. I'll need them to give sympathetic treatment to his case when we get him to the asylum.

Nat (*anxiously — lowering his voice*). And you'll come to take him away tonight — for sure?

Higgins. Twenty minutes after I leave here I'll be back in the car. That's positive.

Nat. And you know your way through the house?

Higgins. Certainly, I remember — but I don't see —

Nat. The outside door will be left open for you. You must come right up. My sister and I will be here — with him. And you understand — Neither of us knows anything about this. The authorities have been complained to — not by us, mind — but by someone. He must never know —

Higgins. Yes, yes — but still I don't — Is he liable to prove violent?

Nat. No — no. He's quiet always — too quiet; but he might do something — anything — if he knows —

Higgins. Rely on me not to tell him, then; but I'll bring along two attendants in case — (*He breaks off, and continues in matter-of-fact tones.*) And now for the facts in this case, if you don't mind, Mr. Bartlett.

Nat (*shaking his head — moodily*). There are cases where facts — Well, here goes — the brass tacks. My father was a whaling captain as his father before him. The last trip he made was seven years ago. He expected to be gone two years. It was four before we saw him again. His ship had been wrecked in the Indian Ocean. He and six others managed to reach a small island on the fringe of the Archipelago — an island absolutely barren, Doctor — after seven days in an open boat. The rest of the whaling crew never were heard from again — gone to the sharks. Of the six who reached the island with my father only three were alive when a fleet of Malay canoes picked them up, mad from thirst and starvation, the four of them. These four men finally reached Frisco. (*With great emphasis*) They were my father; Silas Horne, the mate; Cates, the bosun; and Jimmy Kanaka, a Hawaiian harpooner. Those four! (*With a forced laugh*) There are facts for you. It was all in the papers at the time — my father's story.

*Higgins.* But what of the other three who were on the island?

*Nat (harshly).* Died of exposure, perhaps. Mad and jumped into the sea, perhaps. That was the told story. Another was whispered — killed and eaten, perhaps! But gone — vanished — that, undeniably. That was the fact. For the rest — who knows? And what does it matter?

*Higgins (with a shudder).* I should think it would matter — a lot.

*Nat (fiercely).* We're dealing with facts, Doctor! (*With a laugh*) And here are some more for you. My father brought the three down to this house with him — Horne and Cates and Jimmy Kanaka. We hardly recognized my father. He had been through hell and looked it. His hair was white. But you'll see for yourself — soon. And the others — they were all a bit queer, too — mad, if you will. (*He laughs again.*) So much for the facts, Doctor. They leave off there and the dreams begin.

*Higgins (doubtfully).* It would seem — the facts are enough.

*Nat.* Wait. (*He resumes deliberately.*) One day my father sent for me and in the presence of the others told me the dream. I was to be heir to the secret. Their second day on the island, he said, they discovered in a sheltered inlet the rotten, water-logged hulk of a Malay prau — a proper war prau such as the pirates used to use. She had been there rotting — God knows how long. The crew had vanished — God knows where, for there was no sign on the island that man had ever touched there. The Kanakas went over the prau — they're devils for staying under water, you know — and they found — in two chests — (*He leans back in his chair and smiles ironically.*) Guess what, Doctor?

*Higgins (with an answering smile).* Treasure, of course.

*Nat (leaning forward and pointing his finger accusingly at the other).* You see! The root of belief is in you, too! (*Then he leans back with a hollow chuckle.*) Why, yes. Treasure, to be sure. What else? They landed it and — you can guess the rest, too — diamonds, emeralds, gold ornaments — innumerable, of course. Why limit the stuff of dreams? Ha-ha! (*He laughs sardonically as if mocking himself.*)

*Higgins (deeply interested).* And then?

*Nat.* They began to go mad — hunger, thirst, and the rest — and they began to forget. Oh, they forgot a lot; and lucky for them they did, probably. But my father, realizing, as he told me, what was happening to them, insisted that while they still knew what they were doing they should — guess again now, Doctor. Ha-ha!

*Higgins.* Bury the treasure?

*Nat (ironically).* Simple, isn't it? Ha-ha. And then they made a map — the same old dream, you see — with a charred stick, and my father had care of it. They were picked up soon after, mad as hatters, as I have told you, by some Malays. (*He drops his mocking and adopts a calm, deliberate tone again.*) But the map isn't a dream, Doctor. We're coming back to facts again. (*He reaches into the pocket of his mackinaw and pulls out a crumpled paper.*) Here. (*He spreads it out on the table.*)

*Higgins (craning his neck eagerly).* This is interesting! The treasure, I suppose, is where —

*Nat.* Where the cross is made.

*Higgins.* And here are the signatures, I see. And that sign?

*Nat.* Jimmy Kanaka's. He couldn't write.

*Higgins.* And below? That's yours, isn't it?

*Nat.* As heir to the secret, yes. We all signed it here the morning the *Mary Allen*, the schooner my father had mortgaged this house to fit out, set sail to bring back the treasure. Ha-ha.

*Higgins.* The ship he's still looking for — that was lost three years ago?

*Nat.* The *Mary Allen*, yes. The other three men sailed away on her. Only father and the mate knew the approximate location of the island — and I — as heir. It's — (*He hesitates, frowning.*) No matter. I'll keep the mad secret. My father wanted to go with them — but my mother was dying. I dared not go either.

*Higgins.* Then you wanted to go? You believed in the treasure then?

*Nat.* Of course. Ha-ha. How could I help it? I believed until my mother's death. Then *he* became mad, entirely mad. He built this cabin — to wait in — and he suspected my growing doubt as time went on. So, as final proof, he gave me a thing he had kept hidden from them all — a sample of the richest of the treasure. Ha-ha. Behold! (*He takes from his pocket a heavy bracelet thickly studded with stones and throws it on the table near the lantern.*)

*Higgins (picking it up with eager curiosity — as if in spite of himself).* Real jewels?

*Nat.* Ha-ha! You want to believe, too. No — paste and brass — Malay ornaments.

*Higgins.* You had it looked over?

*Nat.* Like a fool, yes. (*He puts it back in his pocket and shakes his head as if throwing off a burden.*) Now you know why he's mad

— waiting for that ship — and why in the end I had to ask you to take him away where he'll be safe. The mortgage — the price of that ship — is to be foreclosed. We have to move, my sister and I. We can't take him with us. She is to be married soon. Perhaps away from the sight of the sea he may —

*Higgins (perfunctorily).* Let's hope for the best. And I fully appreciate your position. (*He gets up, smiling.*) And thank you for the interesting story. I'll know how to humor him when he raves about treasure.

*Nat (somerly).* He is quiet always — too quiet. He only walks to and fro — watching —

*Higgins.* Well, I must go. You think it's best to take him tonight?

*Nat (persuasively).* Yes, Doctor. The neighbors — they're far away but — for my sister's sake — you understand.

*Higgins.* I see. It must be hard on her — this sort of thing — Well — (*He goes to the door, which NAT opens for him.*) I'll return presently. (*He starts to descend.*)

*Nat (urgently).* Don't fail us, Doctor. And come right up. He'll be here. (*He closes the door and tiptoes carefully to the companion-way. He ascends it a few steps and remains for a moment listening for some sound from above. Then he goes over to the table, turning the lantern very low, and sits down, resting his elbow, his chin on his hand, staring somberly before him. The door in the rear is slowly opened. It creaks slightly and NAT jumps to his feet. . . . In a thick voice of terror*) Who's there?

[*The door swings wide open, revealing SUE BARTLETT. She descends into the room and shuts the door behind her. She is a tall, slender woman of twenty-five, with a pale, sad face framed in a mass of dark red hair. This hair furnishes the only touch of color about her. Her full lips are pale; the blue of her wistful wide eyes is fading into a twilight gray. Her voice is low and melancholy. She wears a dark wrapper and slippers.*]

*Sue (stands and looks at her brother accusingly).* It's only I. What are you afraid of?

*Nat (averts his eyes and sinks back on his chair again).* Nothing. I didn't know — I thought you were in your room.

*Sue (comes to the table).* I was reading. Then I heard someone come down the stairs and go out. Who was it? (*With sudden terror*) It wasn't — Father?

*Nat.* No. He's up there — watching — as he always is.

*Sue (sitting down — insistently).* Who was it?

*Nat (evasively).* A man — I know.

*Sue.* What man? What is he? You're holding something back. Tell me.

*Nat (raising his eyes defiantly).* A doctor.

*Sue (alarmed).* Oh! (*With quick intuition*) You brought him up here — so that I wouldn't know!

*Nat (doggedly).* No. I took him up here to see how things were — to ask him about Father.

*Sue (as if afraid of the answer she will get).* Is he one of them — from the asylum? Oh, Nat, you haven't —

*Nat (interrupting her — hoarsely).* No, no! Be still.

*Sue.* That would be — the last horror.

*Nat (defiantly).* Why? You always say that. What could be more horrible than things as they are? I believe — it would be better for him — away — where he couldn't see the sea. He'll forget his mad idea of waiting for a lost ship and a treasure that never was. (*As if trying to convince himself — vehemently*) I believe this!

*Sue (reproachfully).* You don't, Nat. You know he'd die if he hadn't the sea to live with.

*Nat (bitterly).* And you know old Smith will foreclose the mortgage. Is that nothing? We cannot pay. He came yesterday and talked with me. He knows the place is his — to all purposes. He talked as if we were merely his tenants, curse him! And he swore he'd foreclose immediately unless —

*Sue (eagerly).* What?

*Nat (in a hard voice).* Unless we have — Father — taken away.

*Sue (in anguish).* Oh! But why, why? What is Father to him?

*Nat.* The value of the property — our home which is his, Smith's. The neighbors are afraid. They pass by on the road at nights coming back to their farms from the town. They see *him* up there walking back and forth — waving his arms against the sky. They're afraid. They talk of a complaint. They say for his own good he must be taken away. They even whisper the house is haunted. Old Smith is afraid of his property. He thinks that *he* may set fire to the house — do anything —

*Sue (despairingly).* But you told him how foolish that was, didn't you? That Father is quiet, always quiet.

*Nat.* What's the use of telling — when they believe — when they're afraid? (*SUE hides her face in her hands — a pause. NAT whispers hoarsely.*) I've been afraid myself — at times.



*Sue.* Oh, Nat! Of what?

*Nat (violently).* Oh, him and the sea he calls to! Of the damned sea he forced me on as a boy — the sea that robbed me of my arm and made me the broken thing I am!

*Sue (pleadingly).* You can't blame Father — for your misfortune.

*Nat.* He took me from school and forced me on his ship, didn't he? What would I have been now but an ignorant sailor like him if he had had his way? No. It's the sea I should not blame, that foiled him by taking my arm and then throwing me ashore — another one of *his* wrecks!

*Sue (with a sob).* You're bitter, Nat — and hard. It was so long ago. Why can't you forget?

*Nat (bitterly).* Forget! You can talk! When Tom comes home from this voyage, you'll be married and out of this with life before you — a captain's wife as our mother was. I wish you joy.

*Sue (supplicatingly).* And you'll come with us, Nat — and Father, too — and then —

*Nat.* Would you saddle your young husband with a madman and a cripple? (*Fiercely*) No, no, not I! (*Vindictively*) And not him, either! (*With sudden meaning — deliberately*) I've got to stay here. My book is three-fourths done — my book that will set me free! But I know, I feel, as sure as I stand here living before you, that I must finish it here. It could not live for me outside of this house where it was born. (*Staring at her fixedly*) So I will stay — I will, I tell you! (*Sue sobs hopelessly. After a pause he continues.*) Old Smith told me I could live here indefinitely without paying — as caretaker — if —

*Sue (fearfully — like a whispered echo).* If?

*Nat (staring at her — in a hard voice).* If I have *him* sent — where he'll no longer harm himself — nor others.

*Sue (with horrified dread).* No — no, Nat! For our dead mother's sake.

*Nat (struggling).* Did I say I had? Why do you look at me — like that?

*Sue.* Nat! Nat! For our mother's sake!

*Nat (in terror).* Stop! Stop! She's dead — and at peace. Would you bring her tired soul back to him again to be bruised and wounded?

*Sue.* Nat!

*Nat (clutching at his throat as though to strangle something within him — hoarsely).* Sue! Have mercy! (*His sister stares at him with*

*dread foreboding.* NAT *calms himself with an effort and continues deliberately.*) Smith said he would give two thousand cash if I would sell the place to him — and he would let me stay, rent free, as caretaker.

Sue (*scornfully*). Two thousand! Why, over and above the mortgage, it's worth —

Nat. It's not what it's worth. It's what one can get, cash — for my book — for freedom!

Sue. So that's why he wants Father sent away, the wretch! He must know the will Father made —

Nat. Gives the place to me. Yes, he knows. I told him.

Sue (*dully*). Ah, how vile men are!

Nat (*persuasively*). If it were to be done — if it were, I say — there'd be half for you for your wedding portion. That's fair.

Sue (*horrified*). Blood money! Do you think I could touch it?

Nat (*persuasively*). It would be only fair. I'd give it you.

Sue. My God, Nat, are you trying to bribe me?

Nat. No. It's yours in all fairness. (*With a twisted smile*) You forget I'm heir to the treasure, too, and can afford to be generous. Ha-ha.

Sue (*alarmed*). Nat! You're so strange. You're sick, Nat. You couldn't talk this way if you were yourself. Oh, we must go away from here — you and Father and I! Let Smith foreclose. There'll be something over the mortgage; and we'll move to some little house — by the sea so that Father —

Nat (*fiercely*). Can keep up his mad game with me — whispering dreams in my ear — pointing out to sea — mocking me with stuff like this! (*He takes the bracelet from his pocket. The sight of it infuriates him and he hurls it into a corner, exclaiming in a terrible voice*) No! No! It's too late for dreams now. It's too late! I've put them behind me tonight — forever!

Sue (*looks at him and suddenly understands that what she dreads has come to pass — letting her head fall on her outstretched arms with a long moan*). Then — you've done it! You've sold him! Oh, Nat, you're cursed!

Nat (*with a terrified glance at the roof above*). Sssh! What are you saying? He'll be better off — away from the sea.

Sue (*dully*). You've sold him.

Nat (*wildly*). No! No! (*He takes the map from his pocket.*) Listen, Sue! For God's sake, listen to me! See! The map of the island. (*He spreads it out on the table.*) And the treasure — where

the cross is made. (*He gulps and his words pour out incoherently.*) I've carried it about for years. Is that nothing? You don't know what it means. It stands between me and my book. It's stood between me and life — driving me mad! *He* taught me to wait and hope with him — wait and hope — day after day. He made me doubt my brain and give the lie to my eyes — when hope was dead — when I knew it was all a dream — I couldn't kill it! (*His eyes starting from his head*) God forgive me, I still believe! And that's mad — mad, do you hear?

*Sue (looking at him with horror).* And that is why — you hate him!

*Nat.* No, I don't — (*Then in a sudden frenzy*) Yes! I do hate him! He's stolen my brain! I've got to free myself, can't you see, from him — and his madness.

*Sue (terrified — appealingly).* Nat! Don't! You talk as if —

*Nat (with a wild laugh).* As if I were mad? You're right — but I'll be mad no more! See! (*He opens the lantern and sets fire to the map in his hand. When he shuts the lantern again it flickers and goes out. They watch the paper burn with fascinated eyes as he talks.*) See how I free myself and become sane. And now for facts, as the doctor said. I lied to you about him. He was a doctor from the asylum. See how it burns! It must all be destroyed — this poisonous madness. Yes, I lied to you — see — it's gone — the last speck — and the only other map is the one Silas Horne took to the bottom of the sea with him. (*He lets the ash fall to the floor and crushes it with his foot.*) Gone! I'm free of it — at last! (*His face is very pale, but he goes on calmly.*) Yes, I sold him, if you will — to save my soul. They're coming from the asylum to get him —

[*There is a loud, muffled cry from above, which sounds like "Sail-ho," and a stamping of feet. The slide to the companionway above is slid back with a bang. A gust of air tears down into the room. NAT and SUE have jumped to their feet and stand petrified. CAPTAIN BARTLETT tramps down the stairs.*]

(*With a shudder*). Did he hear?

*Sue.* Sssh!

[*CAPTAIN BARTLETT comes into the room. He bears a striking resemblance to his son; but his face is more stern and formidable, his form more robust, erect, and muscular. His mass of hair is pure white, his bristly mustache the same, contrasting with the weather-*

*beaten leather color of his furrowed face. Bushy gray brows overhanging the obsessed glare of his fierce dark eyes. He wears a heavy, double-breasted blue coat, pants of the same material, and rubber boots turned down from the knee.}*

*Bartlett (in a state of mad exultation strides toward his son and points an accusing finger at him. NAT shrinks backward a step.)* Bin thinkin' me mad, did ye? Thinkin' it for the past three years, ye bin — ever since them fools on the *Slocum* tattled their lie o' the *Mary Allen* bein' a wreck.

*Nat (swallowing hard — chokingly).* No — Father — I —

*Bartlett.* Don't lie, ye whelp! You that I'd made my heir — aimin' to git me out o' the way! Aimin' to put me behind the bars o' the jail for mad folk!

*Sue.* Father — no!

*Bartlett (waving his hand for her to be silent).* Not you, girl, not you. You're your mother.

*Nat (very pale).* Father — do you think — I —

*Bartlett (fiercely).* A lie in your eyes! I bin a-readin' 'em. My curse on you!

*Sue.* Father! Don't!

*Bartlett.* Leave me be, girl. He believed, didn't he? And ain't he turned traitor — mockin' at me and sayin' it's all a lie — mockin' at himself, too, for bein' a fool to believe in dreams, as he calls 'em.

*Nat (placatingly).* You're wrong, Father. I do believe.

*Bartlett (triumphantly).* Aye, now ye do! Who wouldn't credit their own eyes?

*Nat (mystified).* Eyes?

*Bartlett.* Have ye not seen her, then? Did ye not hear me hail?

*Nat (confusedly).* Hail? I heard a shout. But — hail what? — seen what?

*Bartlett (grimly).* Aye, now's your punishment, Judas. (*Explosively*) The *Mary Allen*, ye blind fool, come back from the Southern Seas — come back as I swore she must!

*Sue (trying to soothe him).* Father! Be quiet. It's nothing.

*Bartlett (not heeding her — his eyes fixed hypnotically on his son's).* Turned the pint a half-hour back — the *Mary Allen* — loaded with gold as I swore she would be — carryin' her lowers — not a reef in 'em — makin' port, boy, as I swore she must — too late for traitors, boy, too late! — droppin' her anchor just when I hailed her.

*Nat* (a haunted, fascinated look in his eyes, which are fixed immovably on his father's). The *Mary Allen*! But how do you know?

*Bartlett*. Not know my own ship! 'Tis you're mad!

*Nat*. But at night — some other schooner —

*Bartlett*. No other, I say! The *Mary Allen* — clear in the moonlight. And heed this: D'you call to mind the signal I gave to Silas Horne if he made this port o' a night?

*Nat* (slowly). A red and a green light at the mainmasthead.

*Bartlett* (triumphantly). Then look out if ye dare! (*He goes to the porthole, left forward.*) Ye can see it plain from here. (*Commandingly*) Will ye believe your eyes? Look — and then call me mad!

[*NAT peers through the porthole and starts back, a dumfounded expression on his face.*]

*Nat* (slowly). A red and a green light at the mainmasthead. Yes — clear as day.

*Sue* (with a worried look at him). Let me see. (*She goes to the porthole.*)

*Bartlett* (to his son, with fierce satisfaction). Aye, ye see now clear enough — too late for you.

[*NAT stares at him spellbound.*]

And from above I saw Horne and Cates and Jimmy Kanaka plain on the deck in the moonlight lookin' up at me. Come! (*He strides to the companionway, followed by NAT.*)

[*The two of them ascend. SUE turns from the porthole, an expression of frightened bewilderment on her face. She shakes her head sadly. A loud "Mary Allen, ahoy!" comes from above in BARTLETT'S voice, followed like an echo by the same hail from NAT. SUE covers her face with her hands, shuddering. NAT comes down the companionway, his eyes wild and exulting.*]

*Sue* (brokenly). He's bad tonight, Nat. You're right to humor him. It's the best thing.

*Nat* (savagely). Humor him? What do you mean?

*Sue* (pointing to the porthole). There's nothing there, Nat. There's not a ship in harbor.

*Nat*. You're a fool — or blind! The *Mary Allen's* there in plain sight of anyone, with the red and the green signal lights. Those fools lied about her being wrecked. And I've been a fool, too.

*Sue.* But, Nat, there's nothing. (*She goes over to the porthole again.*) Not a ship. See.

*Nat.* I saw, I tell you! From above it's all plain. (*He turns from her and goes back to his seat by the table.*)

*Sue* (*following him — pleading frightenedly*). Nat! You mustn't let this — You're all excited and trembling, Nat. (*She puts a soothing hand on his forehead.*)

*Nat* (*pushing her away from him roughly*). You blind fool!

[*BARTLETT comes down the steps of the companionway. His face is transfigured with the ecstasy of a dream come true.*]

*Bartlett.* They've lowered a boat — the three — Horne and Cates and Jimmy Kanaka. They're a-rowin' ashore. I heard the oars in the locks. Listen!

[*A pause.*]

*Nat* (*excitedly*). I hear!

*Sue* (*who has taken the chair by her brother — in a warning whisper*). It's the wind and sea you hear, Nat. Please!

*Bartlett* (*suddenly*). Hark! They've landed. They're back on earth again as I swore they'd come back. They'll be a-comin' up the path now. (*He stands in an attitude of rigid attention.*)

[*NAT strains forward in his chair. The sound of the wind and sea suddenly ceases and there is a heavy silence. A dense green glow floods slowly in rhythmic waves like a liquid into the room — as of great depths of the sea faintly penetrated by light.*]

*Nat* (*catching at his sister's hand — chokingly*). See how the light changes! Green and gold! (*He shivers.*) Deep under the sea! I've been drowned for years! (*Hysterically*) Save me! Save me!

*Sue* (*patting his hand comfortingly*). Only the moonlight, Nat. It hasn't changed. Be quiet, dear, it's nothing.

[*The green light grows deeper and deeper.*]

*Bartlett* (*in a crooning, monotonous tone*). They move slowly — slowly. They're heavy, I know, heavy — the two chests. Hark! They're below at the door. You hear?

*Nat* (*starting to his feet*). I hear! I left the door open.

*Bartlett.* For them?

*Nat.* For them.

*Sue* (*shuddering*). Sssshh!

[*The sound of a door being heavily slammed is heard from way down in the house.*]

Nat (*to his sister — excitedly*). There! You hear?

Sue. A shutter in the wind.

Nat. There is no wind.

Bartlett. Up they come! Up, bullies! They're heavy — heavy!

[*The padding of bare feet sounds from the floor below — then comes up the stairs.*]

Nat. You hear them now?

Sue. Only the rats running about. It's nothing, Nat.

Bartlett (*rushing to the door and throwing it open*). Come in, lads, come in! — and welcome home!

[*The forms of SILAS HORNE, CATES, and JIMMY KANAKA rise noiselessly into the room from the stairs. The last two carry heavy inlaid chests. HORNE is a parrot-nosed, angular old man dressed in gray cotton trousers and a singlet torn open across his hairy chest. JIMMY is a tall, sinewy, bronzed young Kanaka. He wears only a breechcloth. CATES is squat and stout and is dressed in dungaree pants and a shredded white sailor's blouse, stained with iron rust. All are in their bare feet. Water drips from their soaked and rotten clothes. Their hair is matted, intertwined with slimy strands of seaweed. Their eyes, as they glide silently into the room, stare frightfully wide at nothing. Their flesh in the green light has the suggestion of decomposition. Their bodies sway limply, nervelessly, rhythmically as if to the pulse of long swells of the deep sea.*]

Nat (*making a step toward them*). See! (*Frenziedly*) Welcome home, boys!

Sue (*grabbing his arm*). Sit down, Nat. It's nothing. There's no one there. Father — sit down!

Bartlett (*grinning at the three and putting his finger to his lips*). Not here, boys, not here — not before him. (*He points to his son.*) He has no right, now. Come. The treasure is ours only. We'll go away with it together. Come. (*He goes to the companionway. The three follow. At the foot of it HORNE puts a swaying hand on his shoulder and with the other holds out a piece of paper to him. BARTLETT takes it and chuckles exultantly.*) That's right — for him — that's right! (*He ascends. The figures sway up after him.*)

Nat (*frenziedly*). Wait! (*He struggles toward the companionway.*)

Sue (*trying to hold him back*). Nat — don't! Father — come back!

Nat. Father! (*He flings her away from him and rushes up the companionway. He pounds against the slide, which seems to have been shut down on him.*)

Sue (*hysterically — runs wildly to the door in rear*). Help! Help!

[*As she gets to the door DOCTOR HIGGINS appears, hurrying up the stairs.*]

Higgins (*excitedly*). Just a moment, Miss. What's the matter?

Sue (*with a gasp*). My father — up there!

Higgins. I can't see — where's my flash? Ah. (*He flashes it on her terror-stricken face, then quickly around the room. The green glow disappears. The wind and sea are heard again. Clear moonlight floods through the portholes. HIGGINS springs to the companionway. NAT is still pounding.*) Here, Bartlett. Let me try.

Nat (*coming down — looking dully at the doctor*). They've locked it. I can't get up.

Higgins (*looks up — in an astonished voice*). What's the matter, Bartlett? It's all open. (*He starts to ascend.*)

Nat (*in a voice of warning*). Look out, man! Look out for them!

Higgins (*calls down from above*). Them? Who? There's no one here. (*Suddenly — in alarm*) Come up! Lend a hand here! He's fainted!

[*NAT goes up slowly. SUE goes over and lights the lantern, then hurries back to the foot of the companionway with it. There is a scuffling noise from above. They reappear, carrying CAPTAIN BARTLETT'S body.*]

Easy now!

[*They lay him on the couch in rear. SUE sets the lantern down by the couch. HIGGINS bends and listens for a heartbeat. Then he rises, shaking his head.*]

I'm sorry —

Sue (*dully*). Dead?

Higgins (*nodding*). Heart failure, I should judge. (*With an attempt at consolation*) Perhaps it's better so, if —



*Nat (as if in a trance).* There was something Horne handed him. Did you see?

*Sue (wringing her hands).* Oh, Nat, be still! He's dead. (*To HIGGINS with pitiful appeal*) Please go — go —

*Higgins.* There's nothing I can do?

*Sue.* Go — please —

[*HIGGINS bows stiffly and goes out. NAT moves slowly to his father's body, as if attracted by some irresistible fascination.*]

*Nat.* Didn't you see? Horne handed him something.

*Sue (sobbing).* Nat! Nat! Come away! Don't touch him, Nat! Come away.

[*But her brother does not heed her. His gaze is fixed on his father's right hand, which hangs downward over the side of the couch. He pounces on it and, forcing the clenched fingers open with a great effort, secures a crumpled ball of paper.*]

*Nat (flourishing it above his head with a shout of triumph).* See! (*He bends down and spreads it out in the light of the lantern.*) The map of the island! Look! It isn't lost for me after all! There's still a chance — *my chance!* (*With mad, solemn decision*) When the house is sold I'll go — and I'll find it! Look! It's written here in his handwriting: "The treasure is buried where the cross is made."

*Sue (covering her face with her hands — brokenly).* Oh! Come away, Nat! Come away!

[CURTAIN]

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why did O'Neill select this particular room for the setting of the play? Why did he have the action take place at night?
2. Was it sensible for the doctor to make two trips only twenty minutes apart? Why did the dramatist need to have him do so?
3. Notice the skillful handling of the exposition. How is the summary of previous happenings made natural? How does Dr. Higgins help? What is the first hint that Nat, too, is threatened with insanity?
4. The map is mentioned in the title to call the attention of the audience to the map in the play. How does it high-light the wavering of Nat's hold on sanity?
5. In the argument over putting the captain in the asylum, do you sym-

pathize with Nat or with Sue? Which has the better reasons for his position in the argument?

6. What is the climax of the excitement over the return of the *Mary Allen*? Why are the ghosts shown as real men and not just suggested by the dialogue?

7. Why does Sue hurry Dr. Higgins away at the end of the play? Is the ending fair to Nat? To Sue? Are you glad the old captain died? Why?

8. Emotional excitement is the whole purpose of the play. Find particular lines that reveal situations or emotions so as to send a thrill over the audience.

9. Vocabulary: mainmasthead, companionway, poop, binnacle, dungaree.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

10. Comparison is the life of description — especially when the comparison can be made with a single word, as it is in the phrase “an *aquiline* nose” (page 731). *Aquiline* means like an eagle and should give you an immediately clear idea of Nat's looks. We have many similar words, usually formed from the Latin names of animals. *Leonine* (like a lion) is used of a head with a heavy “mane” of hair and a majestic look. Would the word be a good one to describe Nat? Do you know *feline*, the sophisticated word for catty, and *bovine*, or cowlike, used to indicate a dull, placid expression or disposition? You do not need to know Latin to guess the meaning of *asinine*.

## THORNTON WILDER (1897- )

Like Eugene O'Neill, Thornton Wilder scored a hit with his first play to reach Broadway. But he had already established an enviable reputation as a novelist before he turned dramatist; and he is the only person to have won the Pulitzer Prize in both fields, for the novel with *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1928) and for the drama with *Our Town* (1938). This full-length play was preceded by a group of very short plays, *The Angel That Troubled the Waters* (1928), and a number of excellent one-act plays published in the collection called *The Long Christmas Dinner* (1932).

Wilder's early life and education followed a winding trail. Born in Madison, Wisconsin, he started his schooling in California; continued it in China, where his father was stationed for eight years in government service; and attended college at Oberlin, in Ohio, and at Yale. During

1920 he was a graduate student at the American Academy in Rome. Of these places only Rome found its way into his writings — in his first novel, *The Cabala* (1926). His most successful novel, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, has its scene in early Peru, a country he has never visited; and his most successful play is about a small town in New Hampshire. But such is his capacity for studying and recreating a place that he seems to know both the simple and the complex features of life in any place he chooses for the setting of a story.

Wilder's various works reveal him to be no great admirer of plot, in the usual sense of the word, although he has great interest in happenings as they reveal human values and motives. All his work is distinguished by one of the finest styles in contemporary literature, apparently simple yet possessing the rhythm and flow, the gift for apt image and revealing phrase, that are found more often in poetry than in novels and plays.

## OUR TOWN<sup>1</sup>

In a day when new patterns and forms are the rule rather than the exception in the theater, *Our Town* is notable for genuine originality. Its free and easy shifts of scenes; the liberties it takes with time, moving now forward, now backward; its independence of conventional scenery and stage properties, are smoothly knit together by the remarkable invention of the Stage Manager, who directs and explains the action, takes the part of a minor character here and there, sets up the simple substitutes for regular properties, takes over the usual responsibilities of the printed program, and regards the whole life of the little village with understanding and quiet humor. Wilder himself says that the Stage Manager is "a hang-over from a novelist's technique," and critics say that he is a compound of the property man of Chinese drama and the chorus of Greek drama. But he is not fully explained by either explanation. He is the spirit, the genius, of his town; and he is a poet and a philosopher as well. Super-human or not, he is most of the time simply one of the most genial and winning characters yet to appear on our stage.

But one novel character, or creation rather, could never have won

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America as this play has. It has been produced by professional and amateur groups all over the country, everywhere with great success and with a warmer response than any technical innovation could call forth. Coming at a time when most literature is critical and satirical or gloomy and pessimistic, when most of the theatrical fare offered the public is either sensational or oversophisticated, this honest, warmhearted, cheering view of the satisfactions of simple living has won its thousands of admirers with plain goodness and wholesomeness. Do not look for excitement or for sentimentality. If you enter wholeheartedly into the dramatist's story and mood, you will find a deep satisfaction that is infinitely better.

## CHARACTERS

|                   |                      |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| STAGE MANAGER     | WOMAN IN THE BALCONY |
| DR. GIBBS         | TALL MAN AT BACK OF  |
| JOE CROWELL, JR.  | AUDITORIUM           |
| HOWIE NEWSOME     | LADY IN A BOX        |
| MRS. GIBBS        | SIMON STIMSON        |
| MRS. WEBB         | MRS. SOAMES          |
| GEORGE GIBBS      | CONSTABLE WARREN     |
| REBECCA GIBBS     | SI CROWELL           |
| WALLY WEBB        | SAM CRAIG            |
| EMILY WEBB        | JOE STODDARD         |
| PROFESSOR WILLARD | PEOPLE OF THE TOWN   |
| MR. WEBB          |                      |

*The entire play takes place in Grover's Corners, N. H., 1901 to 1913.*

## ACT I

*No curtain. No scenery. The audience, arriving, sees an empty stage in half-light.*

*Presently the STAGE MANAGER, hat on and pipe in mouth, enters and begins placing a table and several chairs downstage left, and a table and chairs downstage right. "Left" and "right" are from the point of view of the actor facing the audience. "Up" is toward the back wall.*

*As the house lights go down, he has finished setting the stage and, leaning against the right proscenium pillar, watches the late arrivals in the audience. When the auditorium is in complete darkness, he speaks.*

*Stage Manager.* This play is called *Our Town*. It was written by Thornton Wilder; produced and directed by A\_\_\_\_\_ [or: produced by A\_\_\_\_\_; directed by B\_\_\_\_\_]. In it you will see Miss C\_\_\_\_\_, Miss D\_\_\_\_\_, Miss E\_\_\_\_\_, and Mr. F\_\_\_\_\_, Mr. G\_\_\_\_\_, Mr. H\_\_\_\_\_, and many others.

The name of the town is Grover's Corners, New Hampshire — just across the Massachusetts line: longitude forty-two degrees, forty minutes; latitude seventy degrees, thirty-seven minutes.

The first act shows a day in our town. The day is May 7, 1901. The time is just before dawn.

[*A rooster crows.*]

The sky is beginning to show some streaks of light over in the east there, behind our mount'in. The morning star always gets wonderful bright the minute before it has to go. (*He stares at it for a moment, then goes upstage.*)

Well, I'd better show you how our town lies. Up here (*that is, parallel with the back wall*) is Main Street. Way back there is the railway station; tracks go that way. Polish Town's across the tracks and some Canuck families. (*Toward the left*) Over there is the Congregational Church; across the street's the Presbyterian. Methodist and Unitarian are over there. Baptist is down in the holla' by the river. Catholic Church is over beyond the tracks.

Here's the Town Hall and Post Office combined; jail's in the basement. Bryan once made a speech from these steps here. Along here's a row of stores. Hitching posts and horse blocks in front of them. First automobile's going to come along in about five years — belonged to Banker Cartwright, our richest citizen . . . lives in the big white house up on the hill.

Here's the grocery store and here's Mr. Morgan's drugstore. Most everybody in town manages to look into those two stores once a day. Public school's over yonder. High school's still farther over. Quarter of nine mornings, noontimes, and three o'clock afternoons, the hull town can hear the yelling and screaming from those schoolyards. (*He approaches the table and chairs downstage right.*)

This is our doctor's house — Doc Gibbs's. This is the back door.

[*Two arched trellises are pushed out, one by each proscenium pillar.*]

There's some scenery for those who think they have to have scenery. There's a garden here. Corn . . . peas . . . beans . . . hollyhocks . . . heliotrope . . . and a lot of burdock. (*Crosses the stage.*)

In those days our newspaper come out twice a week — the Grover's Corners *Sentinel* — and this is Editor Webb's house. And this is Mrs. Webb's garden. Just like Mrs. Gibbs's, only it's got a lot of sun-flowers, too. Right here — big butternut tree.

*[He returns to his place by the right proscenium pillar and looks at the audience for a minute.]*

Nice town, y'know what I mean? Nobody very remarkable ever come out of it — s'far as we know. The earliest tombstones in the cemetery up there on the mountain say 1670, 1680 — they're Grovers and Cartwrights and Gibbises and Herseys — same names as are around here now.

Well, as I said, it's about dawn. The only lights on in town are in a cottage over by the tracks where a Polish mother's just had twins. And in the Joe Crowell house, where Joe Junior's getting up so as to deliver the paper. And in the depot, where Shorty Hawkins is gettin' ready to flag the five forty-five for Boston.

*[A train whistle is heard. The STAGE MANAGER takes out his watch and nods.]*

Naturally, out in the country — all around — they've been lights on for some time, what with milkin's and so on. But town people sleep late.

So — another day's begun. There's Doc Gibbs comin' down Main Street now, comin' back from that baby case. And here's his wife comin' downstairs to get breakfast. Doc Gibbs died in 1930. The new hospital's named after him. Mrs. Gibbs died first — long time ago, in fact. She went out to visit her daughter, Rebecca, who married an insurance man in Canton, Ohio, and died there — pneumonia — but her body was brought back here. She's up in the cemetery there now, in with a whole mess of Gibbises and Herseys — she was Julia Hersey 'fore she married Doc Gibbs in the Congregational Church over there.

In our town we like to know the facts about everybody. . . . That's Doc Gibbs. And there comes Joe Crowell, Jr., delivering Mr. Webb's *Sentinel*.

*[DR. GIBBS has been coming along Main Street from the left. At the point where he would turn to approach his house, he stops, sets down his — imaginary — black bag, takes off his hat, and rubs his face with fatigue, using an enormous handkerchief. MRS. GIBBS has*

*entered her kitchen, gone through the motions of putting wood into a stove, lighting it, and preparing breakfast. Suddenly, JOE CROWELL, JR., starts down Main Street from the right, hurling imaginary newspapers into doorways.]*

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* Morning, Doc Gibbs.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Morning, Joe.

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* Somebody been sick, Doc?

*Dr. Gibbs.* No. Just some twins born over in Polish Town.

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* Do you want your paper now?

*Dr. Gibbs.* Yes, I'll take it. Anything serious goin' on in the world since Wednesday?

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* Yessir. My school teacher, Miss Foster, 's getting married to a fella over in Concord.

*Dr. Gibbs.* I declare. How do you boys feel about that?

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* Well, of course, it's none of my business — but I think if a person starts out to be a teacher, she ought to stay one.

*Dr. Gibbs.* How's your knee, Joe?

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* Fine, Doc. I never think about it at all. Only like you said, it always tells me when it's going to rain.

*Dr. Gibbs.* What's it telling you today? Goin' to rain?

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* No, sir.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Sure?

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* Yessir.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Knee ever make a mistake?

*Joe Crowell, Jr.* No, sir.

[JOE goes off. DR. GIBBS stands reading his paper.]

*Stage Manager.* Here comes Howie Newsome delivering the milk.

[HOWIE NEWSOME comes along Main Street, passes DR. GIBBS, comes down the center of the stage, leaves some bottles at MRS. WEBB'S back door, and crosses the stage to MRS. GIBBS'S.]

*Howie Newsome.* Git-ap, Bessie. What's the matter with you?  
. . . Morning, Doc.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Morning, Howie.

*Howie Newsome.* Somebody sick?

*Dr. Gibbs.* Pair of twins over to Mrs. Goruslawski's.

*Howie Newsome.* Twins, eh? This town's gettin' bigger every year.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Going to rain, Howie?

*Howie Newsome.* No, no. Fine day — that'll burn through. Come on, Bessie.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Hello, Bessie. (*He strokes her.*) How old is she, Howie?

*Howie Newsome.* Going on seventeen. Bessie's all mixed up about the route ever since the Lockharts stopped takin' their quart of milk every day. She wants to leave 'em a quart just the same — keeps scolding me the hull trip.

[*He reaches MRS. GIBBS'S back door. She is waiting for him.*]

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Good morning, Howie.

*Howie Newsome.* Morning, Mrs. Gibbs. Doc's just comin' down the street.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Is he? Seems like you're late today?

*Howie Newsome.* Yes. Somep'n went wrong with the separator. Don't know what 'twas.

[*He goes back to Main Street, clucks for Bessie, and goes off right. DR. GIBBS reaches his home and goes in.*]

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Everything all right?

*Dr. Gibbs.* Yes. I declare — easy as kittens.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Bacon'll be ready in a minute. Set down and drink your coffee. Child-run! Child-run! Time to get up. George! Rebecca! . . . You can catch a couple hours' sleep this morning, can't you?

*Dr. Gibbs.* Hm! . . . Mrs. Wentworth's coming at eleven. Guess I know what it's about, too. Her stummick ain't what it ought to be.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* All told, you won't get more'n three hours' sleep. Frank Gibbs, I don't know what's goin' to become of you. I do wish I could get you to go away some place and take a rest. I think it would do you good.

*Mrs. Webb.* Emileeee! Time to get up! Wally! Seven o'clock!

*Mrs. Gibbs.* I declare, you got to speak to George. Seems like something's come over him lately. He's no help to me at all. I can't even get him to cut me some wood.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Is he sassy to you?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* No. He just whines! All he thinks about is that baseball — George! Rebecca! You'll be late for school.

*Dr. Gibbs.* M-m-m. . . .

*Mrs. Gibbs.* George!



*Dr. Gibbs.* George, look sharp!

*George's Voice.* Yes, Pa!

*Dr. Gibbs (as he goes off the stage).* Don't you hear your mother calling you?

*Mrs. Webb.* Walleee! Emileee! You'll be late for school! Walleee! You wash yourself good or I'll come up and do it myself.

*Rebecca Gibbs's Voice.* Ma! What dress shall I wear?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Don't make a noise. Your father's been out all night and needs his sleep. I washed and ironed the blue gingham for you special.

*Rebecca.* Ma, I hate that dress.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Oh, hush up with you.

*Rebecca.* Every day I go to school dressed like a sick turkey.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Now, Rebecca, don't be impossible. You always look very nice.

*Rebecca.* Mama, George's throwing soap at me.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* I'll come up and slap the both of you — that's what I'll do.

[*A factory whistle sounds. The children enter and take their places at the breakfast tables: EMILY and WALLY WEBB; GEORGE and REBECCA GIBBS.*]

*Stage Manager.* We've got a factory in our town too — hear it? Makes blankets. Cartwrights own it and it brung 'em a fortune.

*Mrs. Webb.* Children! Now I won't have it. Breakfast is just as good as any other meal and I won't have you gobbling like wolves. It'll stunt your growth — that's a fact. Put away your book, Wally.

*Wally.* Aw, Ma!

*Mrs. Webb.* You know the rule's well as I do — no books at table. As for me, I'd rather have my children healthy than bright.

*Emily.* I'm both, Mama; you know I am. I'm the brightest girl in school for my age. I have a wonderful memory.

*Mrs. Webb.* Eat your breakfast.

*Wally.* I'm bright, too, when I'm looking at my stamp collection.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* I'll speak to your father about it when he's rested. Seems to me twenty-five cents a week's enough for a boy your age. I declare I don't know how you spend it all.

*George.* Aw, Ma — I gotta lotta things to buy.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Strawberry phosphates — that's what you spend it on.

*George.* I don't see how Rebecca comes to have so much money. She has more'n a dollar.

*Rebecca (spoon in mouth, dreamily).* I've been saving it up gradual.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, dear, I think it's a good thing every now and then to spend some.

*Rebecca.* Mama, do you know what I love most in the world — do you? Money!

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Eat your breakfast.

[*The school bell is heard.*]

*The Children.* Mama, there's first bell. . . . I gotta hurry. . . . I don't want any more.

*Mrs. Webb.* Walk fast, but you don't have to run. Wally, pull up your pants at the knee. Stand up straight, Emily.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Tell Miss Foster I send her my best congratulations. Can you remember that?

*Rebecca.* Yes, Ma.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* You look real nice, Rebecca. Pick up your feet.

*All.* Good-by.

[*The children from the two houses join at the center of the stage and go up to Main Street, then off left. MRS. GIBBS fills her apron with food for the chickens and comes down to the footlights.*]

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Here, chick, chick, chick. . . . No, go away, you. Go away. . . . Here, chick, chick, chick. What's the matter with you? Fight, fight, fight — that's all you do. Hm . . . you don't belong to me. Where'd you come from? (*She shakes her apron.*) Oh, don't be so scared. Nobody's going to hurt you.

[*MRS. WEBB is sitting by her trellis, stringing beans.*]

Good morning, Myrtle. How's your cold?

*Mrs. Webb.* Well, it's better; but I told Charles I didn't know as I'd go to choir practice tonight. Wouldn't be any use.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Just the same, you come to choir practice, Myrtle, and try it.

*Mrs. Webb.* Well, if I don't feel any worse than I do now I probably will. While I'm resting myself, I thought I'd string some of these beans.

*Mrs. Gibbs (rolling up her sleeves as she crosses the stage for a chat).* Let me help you. Beans have been good this year.

*Mrs. Webb.* I've decided to put up forty quarts if it kills me. The children say they hate 'em, but I notice they're able to get 'em down all winter. (*Pause*)

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Now, Myrtle. I've got to tell you something, because if I don't tell somebody I'll burst.

*Mrs. Webb.* Why, Julia Gibbs!

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Here, give me some more of those beans. Myrtle, did one of those secondhand furniture men from Boston come to see you last Friday?

*Mrs. Webb.* No—o.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, he called on me. First I thought he was a patient wantin' to see Doctor Gibbs. 'N he wormed his way into my parlor, and, Myrtle Webb, he offered me three hundred and fifty dollars for Grandmother Wentworth's highboy, as I'm sitting here!

*Mrs. Webb.* Why, Julia Gibbs!

*Mrs. Gibbs.* He did! That old thing! Why, it was so big I didn't know where to put it, and I almost give it to Cousin Hester Wilcox.

*Mrs. Webb.* Well, you're going to take it, aren't you?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* I don't know.

*Mrs. Webb.* You don't know — three hundred and fifty dollars! What's come over you?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, if I could get the Doctor to take the money and go away some place on a real trip I'd sell it like that. Myrtle, ever since I was *that* high I've had the thought that I'd like to see Paris, France. I suppose I'm crazy.

*Mrs. Webb.* Oh, I know what you mean. How does the Doctor feel about it?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, I did beat about the bush a little and said that if I got a legacy — that's the way I put it — I'd make him take me somewhere.

*Mrs. Webb.* M-m-m. . . . What did he say?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* You know how he is. I haven't heard a serious word out of him ever since I've known him. No, he said, it might make him discontented with Grover's Corners to go traipsin' about Europe: better let well enough alone, he says. Every two years he makes a trip to the battlefields of the Civil War; and that's enough treat for anybody, he says.

*Mrs. Webb.* Well, Mr. Webb just *admires* the way Dr. Gibbs knows everything about the Civil War. Mr. Webb's a good mind to give up Napoleon and move over to the Civil War, only Dr. Gibbs

being one of the greatest experts in the country just makes him despair.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* It's a fact! Doctor Gibbs is never so happy as when he's at Antietam or Gettysburg. The times I've walked over those hills, Myrtle, stopping at every bush and pacing it all out, like we was going to buy it.

*Mrs. Webb.* Well, if that secondhand man's really serious about buyin' it, Julia, you sell it. And then you'll get to see Paris, all right.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Oh, I'm sorry I mentioned it. Only it seems to me that once in your life before you die you ought to see a country where they don't talk and think in English and don't even want to.

[*The STAGE MANAGER returns to the center of the stage.*]

*Stage Manager.* That'll do. That'll do. Thank you very much, ladies.

[*MRS. GIBBS and MRS. WEBB gather up their things, return into their homes, and disappear.*]

Now we're going to skip a few hours in the day at Grover's Corners. But before we go on, I want you to know some more things about the town — all kinds of things. So I've asked Professor Willard of our State University to come down here and sketch in a few details of our past history — kind of scientific account, you might say. Is Professor Willard here?

[*PROFESSOR WILLARD, a rural savant, pince-nez on a wide satin ribbon enters from the right with some notes in his hand.*]

May I introduce Professor Willard of our university. A few brief notes, thank you, Professor — unfortunately our time is limited.

*Professor Willard.* Grover's Corners . . . let me see . . . Grover's Corners lies on the old Archeozoic granite of the Appalachian range. I may say it's some of the oldest land in the world. We're very proud of that. A shelf of Devonian basalt crosses it with vestiges of Mesozoic shale, and some sandstone outcroppings; but that's all more recent: two hundred, three hundred, million years old. Some highly interesting fossils have been found — I may say unique fossils — two miles out of town, in Silas Peckham's cow pasture. They can be seen at the museum in our university at any time. . . . Did you wish the meteorological conditions?

*Stage Manager.* Thank you. We would.

*Professor Willard.* The mean precipitation is forty inches. The

mean annual temperature is forty-three degrees, ranging between one hundred two degrees in the shade and thirty-eight degrees below zero in winter. The . . . the . . . uh . . .

*Stage Manager.* Thank you, Professor. And have you Professor Gruber's notes on the history of human life here?

*Professor Willard.* Hm . . . yes . . . anthropological data. Early Amerindian stock. Cotahatchee tribes . . . no evidence before the tenth century of this era . . . hm . . . now entirely disappeared . . . possible traces in three families. Migration toward the end of the seventeenth century of English brachycephalic blue-eyed stock . . . for the most part. Since then some influx of Slav and Mediterranean types. . . .

*Stage Manager.* And the population, Professor Willard?

*Professor Willard.* Within the town limits, 2,640. The postal district brings in five hundred seven more. Mortality and birth rates are constant; by MacPherson's gauge, 6.032.

*Stage Manager.* Thank you *very* much, Professor. We're all very much obliged to you, I'm sure.

*Professor Willard.* Not at all, sir; not at all.

*Stage Manager.* This way, Professor, and thank you again.

[*Exit* PROFESSOR WILLARD.]

Now the political and social report: Editor Webb. . . . Oh, Mr. Webb?

[*MRS. WEBB appears at her back door.*]

*Mrs. Webb.* He'll be here in a minute. . . . He just cut his hand while he was eatin' an apple.

*Stage Manager.* Thank you, Mrs. Webb.

*Mrs. Webb.* Charles! Everybody's waitin'. (*Exit.*)

*Stage Manager.* Mr. Webb is publisher and editor of the Grover's Corners *Sentinel*. That's our local paper, y'know.

[*MR. WEBB enters from his house, pulling on his coat. His finger is bound in a handkerchief.*]

*Mr. Webb.* Hm. . . . I don't have to tell you that we're run here by a board of selectmen. All males vote at the age of twenty-one. Women vote indirect. We're lower middle-class, sprinkling of professional men . . . ten per cent illiterate laborers. Politically, we're eighty-six per cent Republicans; six per cent Democrats; four per cent Socialists; rest, indifferent. Religiously, we're eighty-five per cent

Protestants; twelve per cent Catholics; rest, indifferent. Do you want the poverty and insanity statistics?

*Stage Manager.* Thank you, no. Have you any comments, Mr. Webb?

*Mr. Webb.* Very ordinary town, if you ask me. Little better behaved than most. Probably a lot duller. But our young people here seem to like it well enough: ninety per cent of 'em graduating from high school settle down right here to live — even when they've been away to college.

*Stage Manager.* Thank you, Mr. Webb. Now, is there anyone in the audience who would like to ask Editor Webb anything about the town?

*Woman in the Balcony.* Is there much drinking in Grover's Corners?

*Mr. Webb.* Well, ma'am, I wouldn't know what you'd call *much*. Satiddy nights the farm hands meet down in Ellery Greenough's stable and holler some. Fourth of July I've been known to taste a drop myself — and Decoration Day, of course. We've got one or two town drunks, but they're always having remorse every time an evangelist comes to town. No, ma'am, I'd say likker ain't a regular thing in the home here, except in the medicine chest. Right good for snakebite, y'know — always was.

*Tall Man at the Back of Auditorium.* Is there no one in town aware of —

*Stage Manager.* Come forward, will you, where we can all hear you — What were you saying?

*Tall Man.* Is there no one in town aware of social injustice and industrial inequality?

*Mr. Webb.* Oh, yes, everybody is — somethin' terrible. Seems like they spend most of their time talking about who's rich and who's poor.

*Tall Man.* Then why don't they do something about it?

*Mr. Webb.* Well, we're ready to listen to everybody's suggestion as to how you can see that the diligent and sensible'll rise to the top and the lazy and quarrelsome sink to the bottom. We'll listen to anybody. Meantime, until that's settled, we try to take care of those that can't help themselves, and those that can we leave alone. Are there any more questions?

*Lady in a Box.* Oh, Mr. Webb? Mr. Webb, is there any culture or love of beauty in Grover's Corners?

*Mr. Webb.* Well, ma'am, there ain't much — not in the sense you

mean. Come to think of it, there's some girls that play the piano at high-school commencement; but they ain't happy about it. Yes, and I see where my daughter's been made to read *The Merchant of Venice* over to the school. Seems all pretty remote to 'em, y'know what I mean. No, ma'am, there isn't much culture; but maybe this is the place to tell you that we've got a lot of pleasures of a kind here: we like the sun comin' up over the mountain in the morning, and we all notice a good deal about the birds. We pay a lot of attention to them, and trees and plants. And we watch the change of the seasons: yes, everybody knows about them. But those other things — you're right, ma'am — there ain't much. *Robinson Crusoe* and the Bible; and Handel's "Largo," we all know that; and Whistler's "Mother" — those are just about as far as we go.

*Lady in a Box.* So I thought. Thank you, Mr. Webb.

*Stage Manager.* All right! All right! Thank you, everybody.

[MR. WEBB *retires.*]

We'll go back to the town now. It's middle of the afternoon. All 2,642 have had their dinners, and all the dishes have been washed. There's an early-afternoon calm in our town: a buzzin' and a hummin' from the school buildings; only a few buggies on Main Street — the horses dozing at the hitching posts; you all remember what it's like. Doc Gibbs is in his office, tapping people and making them say "Ah." Mr. Webb's cuttin' his lawn over there; one man in ten thinks it's a privilege to push his own lawn mower.

No, sir. It's later than I thought. There are the children coming home from school already.

[EMILY WEBB *comes sedately down Main Street, carrying some school-books. There are some signs that she is imagining herself to be a lady of striking elegance. Her father's movements to and fro with the lawn mower bring him into her vicinity.*]

*Emily.* I can't, Lois. I've got to go home and help my mother. I *promised.*

*Mr. Webb.* Emily, walk simply. Who do you think you are today?

*Emily.* Papa, you're terrible. One minute you tell me to stand up straight, and the next minute you call me names. I just don't listen to you. (*She gives him an abrupt kiss.*)

*Mr. Webb.* Golly, I never got a kiss from such a great lady before.

[*He goes out of sight. EMILY leans over and picks some flowers by the gate of her house. GEORGE GIBBS comes careening down Main*

*Street.* *He is throwing a ball up to dizzying heights and waiting to catch it again. This sometimes requires his taking six steps backward.]*

*George.* Excuse me, Mrs. Forrest.

*Stage Manager* (as MRS. FORREST). Go out and play in the fields, young man. You got no business playing baseball on Main Street.

*George.* Awfully sorry, Mrs. Forrest. . . . Hello, Emily.

*Emily.* H'lo.

*George.* You made a fine speech in class.

*Emily.* Well . . . I was really ready to make a speech about the Monroe Doctrine, but at the last minute Miss Corcoran made me talk about the Louisiana Purchase instead. I worked an awful long time on both of them.

*George.* Gee, it's funny, Emily. From my window up there I can just see your head nights when you're doing your homework over in your room.

*Emily.* Why, can you?

*George.* You certainly do stick to it, Emily. I don't see how you can sit still that long. I guess you like school.

*Emily.* Well, I always feel it's something you have to go through.

*George.* Yeah.

*Emily.* I don't mind it really. It passes the time.

*George.* Yeah. . . . Emily, what do you think? We might work out a kinda telegraph from there to there; and once in a while you could give me a kinda hint or two about one of those algebra problems. I don't mean the answers, Emily, of course not . . . just some little hint. . . .

*Emily.* Oh, I think *hints* are allowed. So-ah — if you get stuck, George, you whistle to me; and I'll give you some hints.

*George.* Emily, you're just naturally bright, I guess.

*Emily.* I figure that it's just the way a person's born.

*George.* Yeah. But, you see, I want to be a farmer, and my Uncle Luke says whenever I'm ready I can come over and work on his farm and if I'm any good I can just gradually have it.

*Emily.* You mean the house and everything?

[*Enter MRS. WEBB.*]

*George.* Yeah. Well, thanks. . . . I better be getting out to the baseball field. Thanks for the talk, Emily. . . . Good afternoon, Mrs. Webb.

*Mrs. Webb.* Good afternoon, George.



*George.* So long, Emily.

*Emily.* So long, George.

*Mrs. Webb.* Emily, come and help me string these beans for the winter. George Gibbs let himself have a real conversation, didn't he? Why, he's growing up. How old would George be?

*Emily.* I don't know.

*Mrs. Webb.* Let's see. He must be almost sixteen.

*Emily.* Mama, I made a speech in class today and I was very good.

*Mrs. Webb.* You must recite it to your father at supper. What was it about?

*Emily.* The Louisiana Purchase. It was like silk off a spool. I'm going to make speeches all my life. . . . Mama, are these big enough?

*Mrs. Webb.* Try and get them a little bigger if you can.

*Emily.* Mama, will you answer me a question, serious?

*Mrs. Webb.* Seriously, dear — not serious.

*Emily.* Seriously. Will you?

*Mrs. Webb.* Of course, I will.

*Emily.* Mama, am I good-looking?

*Mrs. Webb.* Yes, of course you are. All my children have got good features; I'd be ashamed if they hadn't.

*Emily.* Oh, Mama, that's not what I mean. What I mean is: Am I *pretty*?

*Mrs. Webb.* I've already told you, yes. Now that's enough of that. You have a nice, young, pretty face. I never heard of such foolishness.

*Emily.* Oh, Mama, you never tell us the truth about anything.

*Mrs. Webb.* I *am* telling you the truth.

*Emily.* Mama, were *you* pretty?

*Mrs. Webb.* Yes, I was, if I do say it. I was the prettiest girl in town next to Mamie Cartwright.

*Emily.* But, Mama, you've got to say *something* about me. Am I pretty enough . . . to get anybody . . . to get people interested in me?

*Mrs. Webb.* Emily, you make me tired. Now stop it. You're pretty enough for all normal purposes. Come along now and bring that bowl with you.

*Emily.* Oh, Mama, you're no help at all.

*Stage Manager.* Thank you. Thank you! That'll do. We'll have to interrupt again here. Thank you, Mrs. Webb; thank you, Emily.

[MRS. WEBB and EMILY *withdraw*.]

There are some more things we've got to explore about this town. This time we're going to go about it in another way: we're going to look back on it from the future. I'm not going to tell you what became of these two families we're seeing most of, because the rest of the play will tell you about them. But take some of these others.

Take Joe Crowell, Jr. Joe was a very bright fellow. He graduated with honors and got a scholarship to Boston Tech — M.I.T., that is. But the war broke out, and Joe died in France. All that education for nothing.

Howie Newsome's still delivering milk at Grover's Corners. He's an old man now, has a lot of help; but he still delivers it himself. Says he gets the feel of the town that way. Carries all the accounts in his head; never has to write down a word.

Mr. Morgan's drugstore ain't the same — it's all citified. Mr. Morgan retired and went to live in San Diego, California, where his daughter married a real-estate man, name of Kerby. Mr. Morgan died there in 1935 and was buried in a lot of palm trees. Kinda lost his religion at the end and took up New Thought or something. They read some newfangled poetry over him and cremated him. The New Hampshire in him sort of broke down in him in that climate, seems like.

The Cartwrights got richer and richer. The house is closed most of the year. They're off eating big dinners in hotels now — in Virginia Hot Springs and Miami Beach. They say the winters are cold here. I see where they've become 'Piscopalians.

The Cartwright interests have just begun building a new bank in Grover's Corners — had to go to Vermont for the marble, sorry to say. And they've asked a friend of mine what they should put in the cornerstone for people to dig up a thousand years from now. Of course, they've put in a copy of the New York *Times* and a copy of Mr. Webb's *Sentinel*. We're kind of interested in this, because some scientific fellas have found a way of painting all that reading matter with a kind of glue — silicate glue — that'll make it keep a thousand, two thousand, years. We're putting in a Bible . . . and the Constitution of the United States and a copy of William Shakespeare's plays. What do you say, folks? What do you think? Y'know — Babylon once had two million people in it, and all we know about 'em is the names of the kings and some copies of wheat contracts and . . . the sales of slaves. Yes, every night all those families sat down to supper, and the father came home from his work, and the smoke went up the chimney — same as here. And even in Greece and Rome all

we know about the real life of the people is what we can piece together out of the joking poems and the comedies they wrote for the theater back then. So I'm going to have a copy of this play put in the cornerstone and the people a thousand years from now'll know a few simple facts about us — more than the Treaty of Versailles and the Lindbergh flight. See what I mean?

Well — you people a thousand years from now — in the provinces north of New York at the beginning of the twentieth century, people eat three times a day: soon after sunrise, at noon, and at sunset. Every seventh day, by law and by religion, was a day of rest, and all work came to a stop. The religion at that time was Christianity. I guess you have some other records about Christianity. The domestic setup was marriage: a binding relation between a male and one female that lasted for life. Christianity strictly forbade killing; but you were allowed to kill animals, and you were allowed to kill human beings in war and government punishings. I guess we don't have to tell you about the government and business forms, because that's the kind of thing people seem to hand down first of all. Let me see now if there's anything else. Oh, yes — at death people were buried in the ground just as they are.

So, friends, this is the way we were in our growing up and in our marrying and in our doctoring and in our living and in our dying. Now we'll return to our day in Grover's Corners: A lot of time has gone by. It's evening. You can hear choir practice going on in the Congregational Church. All the children are at home doing their schoolwork. The day is running down like a tired clock.

[*A choir partially concealed in the orchestra pit has begun singing "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."* SIMON STIMSON stands directing them. Two ladders have been pushed onto the stage; they serve as indication of the second story in the Gibbs and Webb houses. GEORGE and EMILY mount them, and apply themselves to their schoolwork. (See illustration on page 766.) DR. GIBBS has entered and is seated in his kitchen, reading.]

*Simon Stimson.* Now look here, everybody. Music come into the world to give pleasure. Softer! Softer! Get it out of your heads that music's only good when it's loud. You leave loudness to the Methodists. You couldn't beat 'em, even if you wanted to. Now again. Tenors!

*George.* Hsst! *Emily!*

*Emily.* Hello.

*George.* Hello!

*Emily.* I can't work at all. The moonlight's so *terrible*.

*George.* Emily, did you get the third problem?

*Emily.* Which?

*George.* The *third*?

*Emily.* Why, yes, George — that's the easiest of them all.

*George.* I don't see it. Emily, can you give me a *hint*?

*Emily.* I'll tell you one thing: the answer's in yards.

*George.* In yards! How do you mean?

*Emily.* In *square* yards.

*George.* Oh . . . in square yards.

*Emily.* Yes, George, don't you see?

*George.* Yeah.

*Emily.* In square yards of *wallpaper*.

*George.* Wallpaper — oh, I see. Thanks a lot, Emily.

*Emily.* You're welcome. My, isn't the moonlight *terrible*? And choir practice going on. I think if you hold your breath you can hear the train all the way to Contookuck. Hear it?

*George.* M-m-m. What do you know!

*Emily.* Well, I guess I better go back and try to work.

*George.* Good night, Emily. And thanks.

*Emily.* Good night, George.

*Simon Stimson.* Before I forget it: How many of you will be able to come in Tuesday afternoon and sing at Fred Hersey's wedding? Show your hands. That'll be fine; that'll be right nice. We'll do the same music we did for Jane Trowbridge's last month. . . . Now we'll do "Art thou weary; art thou languid?" It's a question, ladies and gentlemen, make it talk. Ready.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Oh, George, can you come down a minute?

*George.* Yes, Pa. (*He descends the ladder.*)

*Dr. Gibbs.* Make yourself comfortable, George; I'll only keep you a minute. George, how old are you?

*George.* I? I'm sixteen, almost seventeen.

*Dr. Gibbs.* What do you want to do after school's over?

*George.* Why, you know, Pa, I want to be a farmer on Uncle Luke's farm.

*Dr. Gibbs.* You'll be willing, will you, to get up early and milk and feed the stock . . . and you'll be able to hoe and hay all day?

*George.* Sure, I will. What are you . . . what do you mean, Pa?

*Dr. Gibbs.* Well, George, while I was in my office today I heard a funny sound. . . . And what do you think it was? It was your

mother chopping wood. There you see your mother — getting up early, cooking meals all day long, washing and ironing; and still she has to go out in the back yard and chop wood. I suppose she just got tired of asking you. She just gave up and decided it was easier to do it herself. And you eat her meals and put on the clothes she keeps nice for you, and you run off and play baseball, — like she's some hired girl we keep around the house but that we don't like very much. Well, I knew all I had to do was call your attention to it. Here's a handkerchief, son. George, I've decided to raise your spending money twenty-five cents a week. Not, of course, for chopping wood for your mother, because that's a present you give her, but because you're getting older — and I imagine there are lots of things you must find to do with it.

George. Thanks, Pa.

Dr. Gibbs. Let's see — tomorrow's payday. You can count on it. Hmm. Probably Rebecca'll feel she ought to have some more too. Wonder what could have happened to your mother. Choir practice never was as late as this before.

George. It's only half-past eight, Pa.

Dr. Gibbs. I don't know why she's in that old choir. She hasn't any more voice than an old crow. . . . Traipsin' around the streets at this hour of the night. . . . Just about time you retired, don't you think?

George. Yes, Pa.

[GEORGE mounts to his place on the ladder. *Laughter and good nights can be heard on stage left and presently* MRS. GIBBS, MRS. SOAMES, and MRS. WEBB come down Main Street. *When they arrive at the center of the stage, they stop.*]

Mrs. Soames. Good night, Martha. Good night, Mr. Foster.

Mrs. Webb. I'll tell Mr. Webb; I *know* he'll want to put it in the paper.

Mrs. Gibbs. My, it's late!

Mrs. Soames. Good night, Irma.

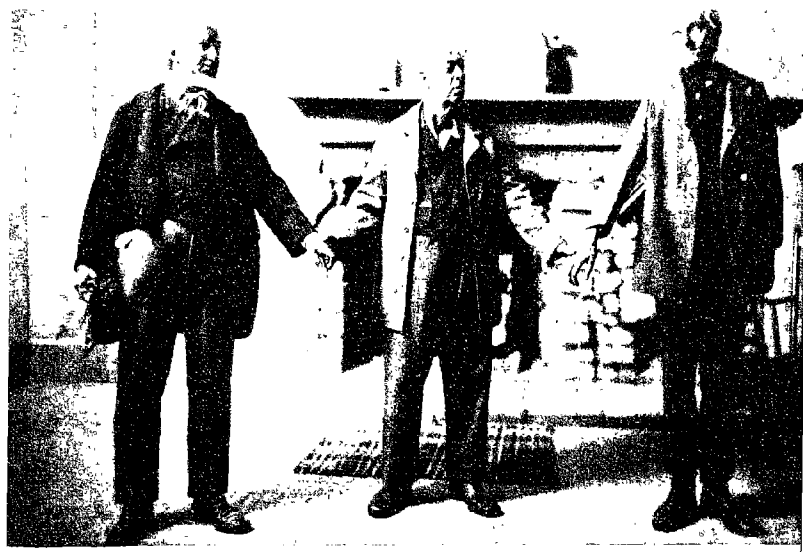
Mrs. Gibbs. Real nice choir practice, wa'n't it? Myrtle Webb! Look at that moon, will you! Tsk-tsk-tsk. Potato weather, for sure.

Mrs. Soames. Naturally I didn't want to say a word about it in front of those others, but now we're alone — really, it's the worst scandal that ever was in this town!

Mrs. Gibbs. What?

Mrs. Soames. Simon Stimson!

Mrs. Gibbs. Now, Louella!



IDOLS OF AMERICAN THEATR-GOERS. In earlier times when the small-town "Opera House" was as much the home of the drama as Broadway, many a popular actor took the same show on the road year after year until he became firmly associated with one role. Three great favorites were Denman Thompson as "Uncle Josh" -- the middle figure in *The Old Homestead* (above), Joseph Jefferson as Rip Van Winkle (below, left), and James O'Neill, father of Eugene, as the Count of Monte Cristo (below, center). Among modern actors the greatest idol has been John Barrymore, here shown in a sketch by Sargent, the famous portrait painter (below, right)

*Photos, Culver*





**FAVORITE PLAYERS IN FAVORITE PLAYS.** High-lights in our theater are the great successes of American actors in favorite plays by American dramatists. Ethel Barrymore won ovations as Madame Trentoni in *Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines*, by Clyde Fitch (*above*). Lynne Fontanne scored a hit as the title character in Kaufman and Connelly's *Dulcy* (*below, left*) and Alfred Lunt in Booth Tarkington's *Clarence* (*below, right*). Later they were married and became one of the greatest acting teams our stage has known.

*Photos, Culver*



THREE SCENES FROM "OUR TOWN." Skilled actors brought *Our Town* to life on a bare stage with the merest suggestion of properties. The boy and girl up on the step-ladders (*top*) are George and Emily studying and dreaming in their upstairs rooms in neighboring houses. The bare plank (*center*) represents the drug store fountain at which they settled their future. Below we see Emily after death curiously watching the mourners at her own funeral.



*Top & bottom, Richard Tucker  
Middle, Vandamm Studio*





*Photos, Culver*



#### IMMORTALS OF THE SCREEN

When the development of the moving picture opened a new field to drama, new stars arose. An artist second to none is Charlie Chaplin, whose screen character of the wistful little man with the derby, the bunchy mustache, and the rolling feet appeals strongly to our sympathies even as he stirs our laughter. A new Chaplin picture is still an important event. The greatest favorite among feminine stars in the early years was Mary Pickford, "America's Sweetheart," pictured at the left in one of the "Cinderella" roles her following dearly loved.

*Mrs. Soames.* But, Julia! To have the organist of a church drink and drunk year after year. You know he was drunk tonight.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Now, Louella! We all know about Mr. Stimson, and we all know about the troubles he's been through, and Dr. Ferguson knows too; and if Dr. Ferguson keeps him on there in his job, the only thing the rest of us can do is just not to notice it.

*Mrs. Soames.* Not to notice it! But it's getting worse.

*Mrs. Webb.* No, it isn't, Louella. It's getting better. I've been in that choir twice as long as you have. It doesn't happen anywhere near so often. . . . My, I hate to go to bed on a night like this. I better hurry. Those children'll be sitting up till all hours. Good night, Louella. (*She hurries downstage, enters her house, and disappears.*)

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Can you get home safe, Louella?

*Mrs. Soames.* It's as bright as day. I can see Mr. Soames scowling at the window now. You'd think we'd been to a dance the way the menfolk carry on.

[*Repeated good nights. MRS. GIBBS arrives at her home.*]

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, we had a real good time.

*Dr. Gibbs.* You're late enough.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Why, Frank, it ain't any later 'n usual.

*Dr. Gibbs.* And you stopping at the corner to gossip with a lot of hens.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Now, Frank, don't be grouchy. Come out and smell my heliotrope in the moonlight.

[*They stroll out arm in arm along the footlights.*]

Isn't that wonderful? What did you do all the time I was away?

*Dr. Gibbs.* Oh, I read — as usual. What were the girls gossiping about tonight?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, believe me, Frank — there is something to gossip about.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Hmm! Simon Stimson far gone, was he?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Worst I've ever seen him. How'll that end, Frank? Dr. Ferguson can't forgive him forever.

*Dr. Gibbs.* I guess I know more about Simon Stimson's affairs than anybody in this town. Some people ain't made for small-town life. I don't know how that'll end; but there's nothing we can do but just leave it alone. Come, get in.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* No, not yet. . . . Oh, Frank, I'm worried about you.

*Dr. Gibbs.* What are you worried about?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* I think it's my duty to make plans for you to get a real rest and change. And if I get that legacy, well, I'm going to insist on it.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Now, Julia, there's no sense in going over that again.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Frank, you're just *unreasonable!*

*Dr. Gibbs.* Come on, Julia, it's getting late. First thing you know you'll catch cold. I gave George a piece of my mind tonight. I reckon you'll have your wood chopped for a while anyway. No, no, start getting upstairs.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Oh, dear. There's always so many things to pick up, seems like. You know, Frank, Mrs. Fairchild always locks her front door every night. All those people up that part of town do.

*Dr. Gibbs.* They're all getting citified, that's the trouble with them. They haven't got nothing fit to burgle and everybody knows it.

[*They disappear. REBECCA climbs up the ladder beside GEORGE.*]

*George.* Get out, Rebecca. There's only room for one at this window. You're always spoiling everything.

*Rebecca.* Well, let me look just a minute.

*George.* Use your own window.

*Rebecca.* I did; but there's no moon there. . . . George, do you know what I think, do you? I think maybe the moon's getting nearer and nearer and there'll be a big 'splosion.

*George.* Rebecca, you don't know anything. If the moon were getting nearer, the guys that sit up all night with telescopes would see it first and they'd tell about it, and it'd be in all the newspapers.

*Rebecca.* George, is the moon shining on South America, Canada, and half the whole world?

*George.* Well — prob'ly is.

[*The STAGE MANAGER strolls on.*]

*Stage Manager.* Nine-thirty. Most of the lights are out. No, there's Constable Warren trying a few doors on Main Street. And here comes Editor Webb, after putting his newspaper to bed.

*Mr. Webb.* Good evening, Bill.

*Constable Warren.* Evenin', Mr. Webb.

*Mr. Webb.* Quite a moon!

*Constable Warren.* Yepp.

*Mr. Webb.* All quiet tonight?

*Constable Warren.* Simon Stimson is rollin' around a little. Just

saw his wife movin' out to hunt for him, so I looked the other way — there he is now.

[SIMON STIMSON comes down Main Street from the left, only a trace of unsteadiness in his walk.]

Mr. Webb. Good evening, Simon. . . . Town seems to have settled down for the night pretty well. . . .

[SIMON STIMSON comes up to him and pauses a moment.]

Good evening. . . . Yes, most of the town's settled down for the night, Simon. . . . I guess we better do the same. Can I walk along a ways with you?

[SIMON STIMSON continues on his way without a word and disappears at the right.]

Good night.

Constable Warren. I don't know how that's goin' to end, Mr. Webb.

Mr. Webb. Well, he's seen a peck of trouble, one thing after another. . . . Oh, Bill . . . if you see my boy smoking cigarettes, just give him a word, will you? He thinks a lot of you, Bill.

Constable Warren. I don't think he smokes no cigarettes, Mr. Webb. Leastways, not more'n two or three a year. He don't belong to that crowd that hangs out down by the gully.

Mr. Webb. Hm. . . . I hope not. Well, good night, Bill.

Constable Warren. Good night, Mr. Webb. (*Exit.*)

Mr. Webb. Who's that up there? Is that you, Myrtle?

Emily. No, it's me, Papa.

Mr. Webb. Why aren't you in bed?

Emily. I don't know. I just can't sleep yet, Papa. The moonlight's so *won*-derful. And the smell of Mrs. Gibbs's heliotrope. Can you smell it?

Mr. Webb. Hm. . . . Yes. Haven't any troubles on your mind, have you, Emily?

Emily. Troubles, Papa. No.

Mr. Webb. Well, enjoy yourself, but don't let your mother catch you. Good night, Emily.

Emily. Good night, Papa.

[MR. WEBB crosses into the house, whistling "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds," and disappears.]

*Rebecca.* I never told you about that letter Jane Crofut got from her minister when she was sick. The minister of her church in the town she was in before she came here. He wrote Jane a letter and on the envelope the address was like this. It said: Jane Crofut, The Crofut Farm, Grover's Corners, Sutton County, New Hampshire, United States of America.

*George.* What's funny about that?

*Rebecca.* But listen, it's not finished: the United States of America, Continent of North America, Western Hemisphere, the Earth, the Solar System, the Universe, the Mind of God — that's what it said on the envelope.

*George.* What do you know!

*Rebecca.* And the postman brought it just the same.

*George.* What do you know!

*Stage Manager.* That's the end of the first act, friends. You can go and smoke now, those that smoke.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY OF ACT I

1. How soon do you realize that the Stage Manager is not an ordinary human being? What does he say that reveals the fact?

2. Compare the detailed description of the scene in *Where the Cross Is Made* with the suggestive description the Stage Manager uses to give the setting for this play. What advantages does each method have? What type of person would prefer Wilder's method? How is each method particularly suited to the type of play in which it is used?

3. Does the admission that Grover's Corners pays little attention to social injustice or to culture and beauty affect your attitude toward the town? Have you had personal experience with the "culture" Editor Webb lists as typical of what his town has?

4. Do you like the family relationships of the Webbs and the Gibbsses? How do the parents handle their children's failings or foolishness? Why is "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds" a good song for the choir to be practicing?

5. Did you notice the quiet, not unkind humor in the accounts of the ways of the townfolk who went to California and to stylish resorts? In the references to Methodists and "Piscopalians"?

6. Why does Rebecca's little news item about the peculiarly addressed letter make a good ending for the first act?

ACT II

*The tables and chairs of the two kitchens are still on the stage. The ladders have been withdrawn. The STAGE MANAGER has been at his accustomed place, watching the audience return to its seats.*

*Stage Manager.* Three years have gone by. Yes, the sun's come up over a thousand times. Summers and winters have cracked the mountains a little bit more, and the rains have brought down some of the dirt. Some babies that weren't even born before have begun talking regular sentences already; and a number of people who thought they were right young and spry have noticed that they can't bound up a flight of stairs like they used to, without their heart fluttering a little. Some older sons are sitting at the head of the table, and some people I know are having their meat cut up for them.

All that can happen in a thousand days. Nature's been pushing and contriving in other ways, too: a number of young people fell in love and got married. Yes, the mountain got bit away a few fractions of an inch, millions of gallons of water went by the mill, and here and there a new home was set up under a roof. Almost everybody in the world gets married. You know what I mean? In our town there aren't hardly any exceptions. Most everybody in the world climbs into their graves married.

The first act was called "The Daily Life." This act is called "Love and Marriage." There's another act coming after this; I reckon you can guess what that's about.

So it's three years later. It's 1904. It's July seventh, just after high-school commencement. That's the time most of our young people jump up and get married. Soon as they've passed their last examinations in solid geometry and Cicero's Orations, looks like they suddenly feel themselves fit to be married.

It's early morning. Only this time it's been raining. It's been pouring and thundering. Mrs. Gibbs's garden, and Mrs. Webb's here — drenched. All those bean poles and pea vines — drenched. All yesterday over there on Main Street the rain looked like curtains being blown along. Hm . . . it may begin again any minute.

There! You can hear the five-forty-five for Boston. And here comes Howie Newsome delivering the milk. And there's Si Crowell delivering the papers like his brother before him. You remember about his brother — all that education he's going to get and that'll be wasted? And there's Mrs. Gibbs and Mrs. Webb come down to make

breakfast, just as though it were an ordinary day. I don't have to point out to the women in my audience that those ladies they see before them, both those ladies cooked three meals a day — one of 'em for twenty years, the other for forty — and no summer vacation. They brought up two children apiece, washed, cleaned the house — and never a nervous breakdown. Never thought themselves hard-used, either.

It's like what one of those Middle West poets said: You've got to love life to have life, and you've got to have life to love life.<sup>1</sup> . . . It's what they call a vicious circle.

[SI CROWELL *has entered, hurling imaginary newspapers into doorways.* HOWIE NEWSOME *has come along Main Street with* BESSIE.]

*Howie Newsome.* Git-ap, Bessie.

*Si Crowell.* Morning, Howie.

*Howie Newsome.* Morning, Si. Anything in the papers I ought to know?

*Si Crowell.* Nothing much, except we're losing about the best baseball pitcher Grover's Corners ever had.

*Howie Newsome.* Reckon he was. He's been standing off the whole of south New Hampshire singlehanded, looks like.

*Si Crowell.* He could hit and run bases, too.

*Howie Newsome.* Yep. Mighty fine ball player. . . . Bessie! I guess I can stop and talk if I've a mind to!

*Si Crowell.* I don't see how he could give up a thing like that just to get married. Would you, Howie?

*Howie Newsome.* Can't tell, Si. Never had no talent that way.

[CONSTABLE WARREN *enters.* *They exchange good mornings.*]

You're up early, Bill.

*Constable Warren.* Seein' if there's anything I can do to prevent a flood. River's been risin' all night.

*Howie Newsome.* Si Crowell's all worked up here about George Gibbs's retiring from baseball.

*Constable Warren.* Yes, sir; that's the way it goes. Back in eighty-four we had a player, Si — even George Gibbs couldn't touch him. Name of Hank Todd. Went down to Maine and become a parson. Wonderful ball player. . . . Howie, how did the weather look to you?

<sup>1</sup> See "Lucinda Matlock" page 635.

*Howie Newsome.* No, 'tain't bad. Think maybe it'll clear up for good.

[CONSTABLE WARREN *and* SI CROWELL *continue on their way.* HOWIE NEWSOME *brings the milk first to* MRS. GIBBS'S *house. She meets him by the trellis.*]

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Good morning, Howie. Do you think it's going to rain again?

*Howie Newsome.* Morning, Mrs. Gibbs. It rained so heavy, I think maybe it'll clear up.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Certainly hope it will.

*Howie Newsome.* How much did you want today?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* I guess I'll need three-a-milk and two-a-cream, Howie. I'm going to have a house full of relations.

*Howie Newsome.* My wife says to tell you we both hope they'll be very happy, Mrs. Gibbs. Know they *will*.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Thanks a lot, Howie. Tell your wife I hope she gits there to the wedding.

*Howie Newsome.* Yes, she'll be there; she'll be there if she kin. (*He crosses to* MRS. WEBB'S *house.*) Morning, Mrs. Webb.

*Mrs. Webb.* Oh, good morning, Mr. Newsome. I told you four quarts of milk, but I hope you can spare me another.

*Howie Newsome.* Yes'm . . . and the two of cream.

*Mrs. Webb.* Will it rain all day, Mr. Newsome?

*Howie Newsome.* No'm. Just sayin' to Mrs. Gibbs as how it may lighten up. Mrs. Newsome told me to tell you as how we hope they'll both be very happy, Mrs. Webb. Know they *will*.

*Mrs. Webb.* Thank you, and thank Mrs. Newsome; and we hope to see you all at the wedding.

*Howie Newsome.* Yes, Mrs. Webb. We hope to git there. Couldn't miss that. Chck! Bessie!

[*Exit* HOWIE NEWSOME. DR. GIBBS *descends in shirt sleeves, and sits down at his breakfast table.*]

*Dr. Gibbs.* Well, Ma, the day has come. You're losin' one of your chicks.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Frank Gibbs, don't you say another word. I feel like crying every minute. Sit down and drink your coffee.

*Dr. Gibbs.* The groom's up shaving himself. Whistling and singing, like he's glad to leave us. Every now and then he says "I do" to the mirror, but it don't sound convincing to me.



*Mrs. Gibbs.* I declare I don't know how he'll get along. I've arranged his clothes and seen to it he's put warm things on — Frank, they're too young! Emily won't think of such things. He'll catch his death of cold within a week. . . . Here's something I made for you.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Why, Julia Hersey! French toast!

*Mrs. Gibbs.* 'Tain't hard to make, and I had to do something.

*Dr. Gibbs.* I remember my wedding morning, Julia.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Now don't start that, Frank Gibbs. I tell you I can't stand it.

*Dr. Gibbs.* I was the scardest young fella in the State of New Hampshire. I thought I'd made a mistake for sure. And when I saw you comin' down that aisle I thought you were the prettiest girl I'd ever seen, but the only trouble was that I'd never seen you before. There I was in the Congregational Church marryin' a total stranger.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* And how do you think I felt! . . . Did you hear Rebecca stirring about upstairs?

*Dr. Gibbs.* Only morning in the year she hasn't been managing everybody's business. She's shut up in her room. I got the impression that maybe she's crying.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Good Lord! This has got to stop. . . . Rebecca! Rebecca! Everything's getting cold down here.

[GEORGE comes rattling down the stairs, very brisk.]

*George.* Good morning, everybody. Only five more hours to live. (*Makes the gesture of cutting his throat.*)

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Where are you going?

*George.* Just stepping across the grass to see my girl.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Now, George! You take an umbrella, or I won't let you out of this house.

*George.* Aw, Ma. It's just a *step*!

*Mrs. Gibbs.* From tomorrow on you can kill yourself in all weathers; but while you're in my house you live wisely, thank you. There are your overshoes right there in the hall. And here's an umbrella.

*George.* Aw, Ma!

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Maybe Mrs. Webb isn't used to callers at seven in the morning. Take a cup-a coffee first.

*George.* Be back in a minute. (*He crosses the stage, leaping over the puddles.*) Good morning, Mother Webb.

*Mrs. Webb.* Goodness! You frightened me! Now, George, you can come in a minute out of the wet, but you know I can't ask you in.

*George.* Why not?

*Mrs. Webb.* George, you know's well as I do: the groom can't see his bride on his wedding day, not until he sees her in church.

*George.* Aw! That's just a superstition.

[*Enter MR. WEBB.*]

*Mr. Webb.* Good morning, George.

*George.* Mr. Webb, you don't believe in that superstition, do you?

*Mr. Webb.* There's a lot of common sense in some superstitions, George.

*Mrs. Webb.* Millions have folla'd it, George, and you don't want to be the first to fly in the face of custom.

*George.* How is Emily?

*Mrs. Webb.* She hasn't waked up yet. I haven't heard a sound out of her.

*George.* Emily's *asleep*!

*Mrs. Webb.* No wonder! We were up till all hours, sewing and packing. I'll tell you what I'll do; you set down here a minute with Mr. Webb and drink this cup of coffee, and I'll go upstairs and see she doesn't come down and surprise you. There's some bacon, too; but don't be long about it.

[*Exit MRS. WEBB. Embarrassed silence.*]

*Mr. Webb.* Well, George, how are you?

*George.* Oh, fine. I'm fine. (*Pause*) Mr. Webb, what sense could there be in a superstition like that?

*Mr. Webb.* Well, you see, on her wedding morning a girl's head's apt to be full of . . . clothes and things like that. Don't you think that's probably it?

*George.* Ye-e-s. I never thought of that.

*Mr. Webb.* A girl's apt to be a mite nervous on her wedding day. (*Pause*)

*George.* I wish a fellow could get married without all that marching up and down.

*Mr. Webb.* Well, every man that's ever lived has felt that way about it, George; but it hasn't done much good. It's the women that have built up weddings, my boy. From now on they have it pretty much as they like. . . . All those good women standing shoulder to shoulder making sure that the knot's tied in a mighty public way.

*George.* But . . . you *believe* in it, don't you, Mr. Webb?

*Mr. Webb.* Oh, yes; oh, yes. Don't you misunderstand me, my boy. Marriage is a wonderful thing — wonderful thing. And don't you forget that, George.

*George.* No, sir. Mr. Webb, how old were you when you got married?

*Mr. Webb.* Well, you see, I'd been to college and I'd taken a little time to get settled. But Mrs. Webb — she wasn't much older than what Emily is. Oh, age hasn't much to do with it, George — not compared to other things.

*George.* What were you going to say, Mr. Webb?

*Mr. Webb.* Oh, I don't know — was I going to say something?

*(Pause)* *George,* I was thinking the other night of some advice my father gave me when I got married. Charles, he said, Charles, start out early showing who's boss, he said. Best thing to do is to give an order, even if it don't make sense; just so she'll learn to obey. And he said: If anything about your wife irritates you — her conversation, or anything — just get up and leave the house. That'll make it clear to her, he said. And, ah, yes! he said never, *never* let your wife know how much money you have, never.

*George.* Well, Mr. Webb . . . I don't think I could . . .

*Mr. Webb.* So I took the opposite of my father's advice and I've been happy ever since. And let that be a lesson to you, George, never to ask advice on personal matters. . . . George, are you going to raise chickens on your farm?

*George.* What?

*Mr. Webb.* Are you going to raise chickens on your farm?

*George.* Uncle Luke's never been much interested, but I thought —

*Mr. Webb.* A book came into my office the other day, George, on the Philo System of raising chickens. I want you to read it. I'm thinking of beginning in a small way in the back yard, and I'm going to put an incubator in the cellar —

[*Enter MRS. WEBB.*]

*Mrs. Webb.* Charles, are you talking about that old incubator again? I thought you two'd be talking about things worth while.

*Mr. Webb.* Well, Myrtle, if you want to give the boy some good advice, I'll go upstairs and leave you alone with him.

*Mrs. Webb.* Now, George, I'm sorry, but I've got to send you away so that Emily can come down and get some breakfast. She told me to tell you that she sends you her love, but that she doesn't want to lay eyes on you. So good-by, George.

[GEORGE crosses the stage to his own home and disappears.]

Mr. Webb. Myrtle, I guess you don't know about that older superstition.

Mrs. Webb. What do you mean, Charles?

Mr. Webb. Since the cave men: the groom shouldn't be left alone with his father-in-law on the day of the wedding, or near it. Now don't forget that!

Stage Manager. Thank you. Thank you, everybody. Now I have to interrupt again here. You see, we want to know how all this began — this wedding, this plan to spend a lifetime together. I'm awfully interested in how big things like that begin. You know how it is. You're twenty-one or twenty-two, and you make some decisions; then whisssh! you're seventy. You've been a lawyer for fifty years, and that white-haired lady at your side has eaten over fifty thousand meals with you. How do such things begin?

George and Emily are going to show you now the conversation they had when they first knew that . . . that . . . as the saying goes . . . they were meant for one another. But before they do it I want you to try and remember what it was like when you were young, when you were fifteen or sixteen. For some reason it is very hard to do: those days when even the little things in life could be almost too exciting to bear. And particularly the days when you were first in love; when you were like a person sleepwalking, and you didn't quite see the street you were in and didn't quite hear everything that was said to you. You're just a little bit crazy. Will you remember that, please?

Now they'll be coming out of high school at three o'clock. George has just been elected president of the junior class; and, as it's June, that means he'll be president of the senior class all next year. And Emily's just been elected secretary and treasurer. I don't have to tell you how important that is. (*He places a board across the backs of two chairs, parallel to the footlights, and places two high stools behind it. This is the counter of MR. MORGAN'S drugstore.*) All ready!

[EMILY, carrying an armful of imaginary schoolbooks, comes along Main Street from the left.]

Emily. I can't, Louise. I've got to go home. Good-by. . . . Oh, Earnestine! Earnestine! Can you come over tonight and do algebra? I did the first and third in study hall. No, they're not hard. But, Earnestine, that Caesar's awful hard. I don't see why we have

to do a thing like that. Come over about seven. Tell your mother you *have* to. G'by. . . . G'by, Helen. G'by, Fred.

[GEORGE, *also carrying books, catches up with her.*]

George. Can I carry your books home for you, Emily?

Emily (*coldly*). Thank you. (*She gives them to him.*)

George. Excuse me a minute, Emily. . . . Say, Bob, get everything ready. I'll be there in a quarter of an hour. If I'm a little late, start practice anyway. And give Herb some long high ones. His eye needs a lot of practice. Seeya later.

Emily. Good-by, Lizzy.

George. Good-by, Lizzy. . . . I'm awfully glad you were elected, too, Emily.

Emily. Thank you.

[*They have been standing on Main Street, almost against the back wall. GEORGE is about to take the first steps toward the audience when he stops again.*]

George. Emily, why are you mad at me?

Emily. I'm not mad at you.

George. You . . . you treat me so funny.

Emily. Well, I might as well say it right out, George. I don't like the whole change that's come over you in the last year. I'm sorry if that hurts your feelings, but I've just got to tell the truth and shame the devil.

George. I'm awfully sorry, Emily. Wha-a-what do you mean?

Emily. Well, up to a year ago I used to like you a lot. And I used to watch you as you did everything . . . because we'd been friends so long . . . and then you began spending all your time at baseball . . . and you never even spoke to anybody any more; not even to your own family you didn't . . . and, George, it's a fact, you've got awful conceited and stuck-up, and all the girls say so. They may not say so to your face, but that's what they say about you behind your back; and it hurts me to hear them say it, but I've got to agree with them a little. I'm sorry if it hurts your feelings . . . but I can't be sorry I said it.

George. I . . . I'm glad you said it, Emily. I never thought that such a thing was happening to me. I guess it's hard for a fella not to have faults creep into his character.

[*They take a step or two in silence, then stand still in misery.*]

*Emily.* I always expect a man to be perfect, and I think he should be.

*George.* Oh . . . I don't think it's possible to be perfect, Emily.

*Emily.* Well, my father is and, as far as I can see, your father is. There's no reason on earth why you shouldn't be, too.

*George.* Well, Emily . . . I feel it's the other way round. That men aren't naturally good, but girls are. Like you and your mother and my mother.

*Emily.* Well, you might as well know right now that I'm not perfect. It's not as easy for a girl to be perfect as a man, because we girls are more nervous. Now I'm sorry I said all that about you. I don't know what made me say it.

*George.* No, no — I guess if it's the truth you ought to say it. You stick to it, Emily.

*Emily.* I don't know if it's the truth or not. And I suddenly feel that it isn't important at all.

*George.* Emily, would you like an ice-cream soda, or something, before you go home?

*Emily.* Well, thank you. . . . I would.

[*They come into the drugstore and seat themselves on the stools.*]

*Stage Manager* (as MR. MORGAN). Hello, George. Hello, Emily. What'll you have? Why, Emily Webb, what've you been crying about?

*George* (*groping for an explanation*). She . . . she just got an awful scare, Mr. Morgan. She almost got run over by that hardware-store wagon. Everybody always says that Tom Huckins drives like a crazy man.

*Stage Manager.* Here, take a drink of water, Emily. You look all shook up. . . . There! Now, what'll you have?

*Emily.* I'll have a strawberry phosphate, thank you, Mr. Morgan.

*George.* No, no. You go and have an ice-cream soda with me, Emily. Two strawberry ice-cream sodas, Mr. Morgan.

*Stage Manager* (*working the faucets*). Yes, sir. I tell you, you've got to look both ways before you cross Main Street these days. Gets worse every year. There are a hundred and twenty-five horses in Grover's Corners this minute I'm talking to you. State inspector was in here yesterday. And now they're bringing in these auto-mobiles, the best thing to do is to just stay home. Why, I can remember the time when a dog could lie down all day in the middle of Main Street and nothing would come to disturb him. . . . Yes, Miss Ellis;

be with you in a minute. . . . Here are your sodas. Enjoy 'em.  
(*He goes off.*)

*Emily.* They're so expensive.

*George.* No, no — don't you think of that. We're celebrating. First, we're celebrating our election. And then do you know what else I'm celebrating?

*Emily.* No.

*George.* I'm celebrating because I've got a friend who tells me all the things that ought to be told me.

*Emily.* George, *please* don't think of that. I don't know why I said it. It's not true. You're —

*George.* No, you stick to it, Emily. I'm glad you spoke to me like you did. But you'll see: I'm going to change so quick — you bet I'm going to change. And, Emily, I want to ask you a favor.

*Emily.* What?

*George.* Emily, if I go away to State Agriculture College next year, will you write me a letter once in a while?

*Emily.* I certainly will. I certainly will, George. (*Pause*) It certainly seems like being away three years you'd get out of touch with things.

*George.* No, no. I mustn't do that. You see, I'm not only going to be just a farmer. After a while, maybe, I'll run for something to get elected. So your letters'll be very important to me; you know, telling me what's going on here and everything. . . .

*Emily.* Just the same, three years is a long time. Maybe letters from Grover's Corners wouldn't be so interesting after a while. Grover's Corners isn't a very important place when you think of all New Hampshire; but I think it's a very nice town.

*George.* The day wouldn't come when I wouldn't want to know everything that's happening here. I know *that's* true, Emily.

*Emily.* Well, I'll try to make my letters interesting. (*Pause*)

*George.* Y'know, Emily, whenever I meet a farmer I ask him if he thinks it's important to go to agricultural school to be a good farmer.

*Emily.* Why, George —

*George.* Yeah, and some of them say that it's even a waste of time. You can get all those things, anyway, out of the pamphlets the government sends out. And Uncle Luke's getting old — he's about ready for me to start in taking over his farm tomorrow, if I could.

*Emily.* My!

*George.* And, like you say, being gone all that time . . . in other places and meeting other people . . . If anything like that can hap-

pen, I don't want to go away. I guess new people aren't any better than old ones. I'll bet they almost never are. Emily, I feel that you're as good a friend as I've got. I don't need to go and meet the people in other towns.

*Emily.* But, George, maybe it's very important for you to go and learn all that about cattle judging and soils and those things. And if you're going into politics, maybe you ought to meet people from other parts of the state . . . of course, I don't know.

*George (after a pause).* Emily, I'm going to make up my mind right now. I won't go. I'll tell Pa about it tonight.

*Emily.* Why, George, I don't see why you have to decide right now. It's a whole year away.

*George.* Emily, I'm glad you spoke to me about that . . . that fault in my character. And what you said was right; but there was *one* thing wrong in it, and that was when you said that for a year I wasn't noticing people, and . . . you, for instance. Listen, Emily . . . you say you were watching me when I did everything. . . . Why, I was doing the same about you all the time. Why, sure — I always thought about you as one of the chief people I thought about. I always made sure where you were sitting on the bleachers, and who you were with. And we've always had lots of talks . . . and joking, in the halls; and they always meant a lot to me. Of course, they weren't as good as the talk we're having now. Lately I'd been noticing that you'd been acting kind of funny to me; and for three days I've been trying to walk home with you, but something's always got in the way. Yesterday I was standing over against the wall waiting for you, and you walked home with Miss Corcoran.

*Emily.* George! . . . Life's awful funny! How could I have known that? Why, I thought —

*George.* Listen, Emily, I'm going to tell you why I'm not going to agricultural school. I think that once you've found a person that you're very fond of . . . I mean a person who's fond of you, too — at least enough to be interested in your character . . . Well, I think that's just as important as college is, and even more so. That's what I think.

*Emily.* I think it's awfully important, too.

*George.* Emily.

*Emily.* Yes, George.

*George.* Emily, if I improve and make a big change . . . would you be . . . I mean, *could* you be . . .

*Emily.* I . . . I am now; I always have been. (*Pause*)



*George.* So I guess this is an important talk we've been having.

*Emily.* Yes.

*George (taking a deep breath and straightening his back).* Wait just a minute and I'll take you home. (*He rises and goes to the STAGE MANAGER, who appears and comes toward him.*) Mr. Morgan, I'll have to go home and get the money to pay you for this. It'll only take me a minute.

*Stage Manager.* What's that? George Gibbs, do you mean to tell me —

*George.* Yes, but I had reasons, Mr. Morgan. Look, here's my gold watch to keep until I come back with the money.

*Stage Manager.* That's all right. Keep your watch. I'll trust you.

*George.* I'll be back in five minutes.

*Stage Manager.* I'll trust you ten years, George — not a day more. . . . Got all over your shock, Emily?

*Emily.* Yes, thank you, Mr. Morgan. It was nothing.

*George (taking up the books from the counter).* I'm ready.

[*They walk in grave silence down the stage, turn, and pass through the trellis at the Webbs' back door and disappear.*]

*Stage Manager.* Thank you, Emily. Thank you, George. . . . Now before we go on to the wedding, there are still some more things we ought to know about this — about this marriage. I want to know some more about how the parents took it; but what I want to know most of all is — oh, you know what I mean — what Grover's Corners thought about marriage, anyway. You know's well as I do: people are never able to say right out what they think of money, or death, or fame, or marriage. You've got to catch it between the lines; you've got to *overhear* it.

Oh, Doctor! Mrs. Gibbs!

[*They appear at their side of the stage and exchange a glance of understanding with him. The STAGE MANAGER lays across two chairs the same plank that served as a drugstore counter, and it has now become MRS. GIBBS'S ironing board. DR. GIBBS sits down in a rocker and smokes. MRS. GIBBS irons a moment in silence, then goes to the foot of the stairs.*]

*Mrs. Gibbs (calling).* Rebecca! It's time you turned out your light and went to sleep. George, you'd better get some sleep, too.

*Rebecca's Voice.* Ma, I haven't finished my English.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* What? Well, I bet you haven't been working, Re-

becca. You've been reading that Sears, Roebuck catalogue, that's what you've been doing. All right, I'll give you ten more minutes. If you haven't finished by then, you'll just have to fail the course and be a disgrace to your father and me. . . . George, what are you doing?

*George's Voice (hurt).* I'm doing history.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, you'd better go to bed. You're probably sleeping at the desk as it is. (*She casts an amused eye at her husband and returns to her ironing.*)

*Dr. Gibbs.* I had a long talk with the boy today.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Did you?

*Dr. Gibbs.* I tell you, Mrs. G., there's nothing so terrifying in the world as a son. The relation of a father to a son is the confounded awkwardest — I always come away feeling like a soggy sponge of hypocrisy.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, a mother and a daughter's no picnic, let me tell you.

*Dr. Gibbs.* George is set on it: he wants to marry Emily soon as school's out and take her right on to the farm. (*Pause*) He says he can sit up nights and learn agriculture from government pamphlets, without going to college for it.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* He always was crazy about farming. Gets that from my people.

*Dr. Gibbs.* At a pinch I guess he could start in farming; but I swear I think he's too young to get married. Julia, he's just a green half-grown kid. He isn't ready to be a family man.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* No, he ain't. You're right. But he's a good boy and I wouldn't like to think of him being alone out there . . . coming into town Satiddy nights, like any old farm hand, tuckered out from work and looking for excitement. He might get into bad ways. It wouldn't be enough fun for him to come and sit by our stove, and holding hands with Emily for a year mightn't be enough either. He might lose interest in her.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Hm.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Frank, I been watching her. George is a lucky boy when you think of all the silly girls in the world.

*Dr. Gibbs.* But, Julia, George *married*. That great, gangling, selfish nincompoop.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Yes, I know. (*She takes up a collar and examines it.*) Frank, what do you do to your collars? Do you gnaw 'em? I never saw such a man for collars.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Julia, when I married you, do you know what one of my terrors was in getting married?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Pshaw! Go on with you!

*Dr. Gibbs.* I was afraid we weren't going to have material for conversation more'n'ld last us a few weeks. I was afraid we'd run out and eat our meals in silence. That's a fact. You and I've been conversing for twenty years now without any noticeable barren spells.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Well, good weather, bad weather, 'tain't very choice but I always manage to find something to say. (*Pause*)

*Dr. Gibbs.* What do you think? What do you think, Julia? Shall we tell the boy he can go ahead and get married?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Seems like it's up to us to decide. Myrtle and Charles Webb are willing. They think it's a good idea to throw the young people into the sea and let'm sink or swim, as soon as they're ready.

*Dr. Gibbs.* What does that mean? Must we decide right now? This minute?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* There you go putting the responsibility on me!

*Dr. Gibbs.* Here it is, almost April. . . . I'll go up and say a word to him right now before he goes to bed. (*He rises.*) You're sure, Julia? You've nothing more to add?

*Mrs. Gibbs (stops ironing a moment).* I don't know what to say. Seems like it's too much to ask, for a big outdoor boy like that to go and get shut up in classrooms for three years. And once he's on the farm he might just as well have a companion, seeing he's found a fine girl like Emily. . . . People are meant to live two-by-two in this world. . . . Yes, Frank, go up and tell him it's all right.

[*DR. GIBBS crosses and is about to call when MRS. GIBBS, her hands on her cheeks, staring into the audience, speaks in sharp alarm.*]

Wait a minute! Wait a minute! (*Then, resuming her ironing*) No — go and tell him.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Why did you stop then, Julia?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Oh, you know: I thought of all those times we went through in the first years when George and Rebecca were babies — you walking up and down with them at three in the morning, the whooping cough, the time George fell off the porch. You and I were twenty-five years old, and more. It's wonderful how one forgets one's troubles, like that. . . . Yes, Frank, go upstairs and tell him. It's worth it.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Yes, they'll have a lot of troubles, but that's none of our business. Let'm. Everybody has a right to his own troubles.

You ought to be present, Julia — important occasion like that. I'll call him. . . . George! Oh, George!

*George's Voice.* Yes, Pa.

*Dr. Gibbs.* Can you come down a minute? Your mother and I want to speak to you.

*George.* Yeah, sure.

*Mrs. Gibbs (putting her arm through her husband's).* Lord, what a fool I am; I'm trembling all over. There's nothing to tremble about.

*Stage Manager.* Thank you! Thank you! . . . Now we're ready to go on with the wedding.

*[While he talks, the actors remove the chairs and tables and trellises from the Gibbs and Webb homes. They arrange the pews for the church in the back of the stage. The congregation will sit facing the back wall. The aisle of the church is in the middle of the scene. A small platform is placed against the back wall; on this the STAGE MANAGER as minister can stand.]*

There are a lot of things to be said about a wedding; there are a lot of thoughts that go on during a wedding. We can't get them all into one wedding, naturally, and especially not into a wedding at Grover's Corners, where they're awfully plain and short. In this wedding I play the minister. That gives me the right to say a few more things about it.

For a while now, the play gets pretty serious. Y'see, some churches say that marriage is a sacrament. I don't quite know what that means, but I can guess. Like Mrs. Gibbs said a few minutes ago: People were made to live two-by-two. This is a good wedding, but people are so put together that even at a good wedding there's a lot of confusion way down deep in people's minds; and we thought that that ought to be in our play, too.

The real hero of this scene isn't on the stage at all, and you know who that is. It's like what one of those European fellas said: Every child born into the world is nature's attempt to make a perfect human being. Well, we've seen nature pushing and contriving for some time now. We all know that nature's interested in quantity; but I think she's interested in quality, too — that's why I'm in the ministry. Maybe she's trying to make another good governor for New Hampshire. And don't forget the other witnesses at this wedding — the ancestors. Millions of them. Most of them set out to live two-by-two, also. Millions of them.

Well, that's all my sermon. 'Twan't very long, anyway.

[*The organ starts playing Handel's "Largo." The congregation streams into the church and sits in silence. MRS. WEBB, on the way to her place, turns back and speaks to the audience.*]

*Mrs. Webb.* I don't know why on earth I should be crying. I suppose there's nothing to cry about. It came over me at breakfast this morning; there was Emily eating her breakfast as she's done for seventeen years, and now she's going off to eat it in someone else's house. I suppose that's it. And Emily! She suddenly said: I can't eat another mouthful, and she put her head down on the table and *she* cried.

[*The choir starts singing "Love Divine, All Love Excelling." GEORGE has reached the stage. He stares at the congregation a moment, then takes a few steps of withdrawal toward the right proscenium pillar.*]

*George (darkly, to himself).* I wish I were back at school. . . . I don't want to get married.

[*His mother has left her seat and come toward him. She stops, looking at him anxiously.*]

*Mrs. Gibbs.* George, what's the matter?

*George.* Ma, I don't want to grow old. Why's everybody pushing me so?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Why, George . . . you wanted it.

*George.* Why do I have to get married at all? Listen, Ma, for the last time I ask you —

*Mrs. Gibbs.* No, no, George . . . you're a man now.

*George.* Listen, Ma, you never listen to me. All I want to do is to be a fella. Why do —

*Mrs. Gibbs.* George! If anyone should hear you! Now stop. Why, I'm ashamed of you!

*George (passing his hand over his forehead).* What's the matter? I've been dreaming. Where's Emily?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Gracious! You gave me such a turn.

*George.* Cheer up, Ma. What are you looking so funny for? Cheer up; I'm getting married.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Let me catch my breath a minute.

*George.* Now, Ma, you save Thursday nights. Emily and I are coming over to dinner every Thursday night . . . you'll see. Ma, what are you crying for? Come on; we've got to get ready for this.

[*In the meantime EMILY, in white and wearing her wedding veil, has come through the audience and mounted on to the stage. She, too, draws back when she sees the congregation in the church. The choir begins "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."*]

*Emily.* I never felt so alone in my whole life. And George over there, looking so . . . I hate him. I wish I were dead. Papa! Papa!

*Mr. Webb* (*leaving his seat in the pews and coming toward her anxiously*). Emily! Emily! Now don't get upset.

*Emily.* But, Papa, I don't want to get married.

*Mr. Webb.* Sh-sh — Emily. Everything's all right.

*Emily.* Why can't I stay for a while just as I am? Let's go away.

*Mr. Webb.* No, no, Emily. Now stop and think.

*Emily.* Don't you remember that you used to say — all the time you used to say that I was *your* girl. There must be lots of places we can go to. Let's go away. I'll work for you. I could keep house.

*Mr. Webb.* Sh. . . . You mustn't think of such things. You're just nervous, Emily. Now, now — you're marrying the best young fellow in the world. George is a fine fellow.

*Emily.* But, Papa —

*Mr. Webb.* George! George!

[*MRS. GIBBS returns to her seat. GEORGE hears MR. WEBB and looks up. MR. WEBB beckons to him. They move to the center of the stage.*]

I'm giving away my daughter, George. Do you think you can take care of her?

*George.* Mr. Webb, I want to . . . I want to try. Emily, I'm going to do my best. I love you, Emily. I need you.

*Emily.* Well, if you love me, help me. All I want is someone to love me.

*George.* I will, Emily.

*Emily.* If ever I'm sick or in trouble, that's what I mean.

*George.* Emily, I'll try. I'll try.

*Emily.* And I mean for *ever*. Do you hear? For ever and ever.

[*They fall into each other's arms. The March from Lohengrin is heard.*]

*Mr. Webb.* Come, they're waiting for us. Now you know it'll be all right. Come, quick.

[GEORGE *slips away and takes his place beside the* STAGE MANAGER-CLERGYMAN. EMILY *proceeds up the aisle on her father's arm.*]

*Stage Manager.* Do you, George, take this woman, Emily, to be your wedded wife, to have . . .

[MRS. SOAMES *has been sitting in the last row of the congregation. She now turns to her neighbors and speaks in a shrill voice.*]

*Mrs. Soames.* Perfectly lovely wedding! Loveliest wedding I ever saw. Oh, I do love a good wedding, don't you? Doesn't she make a lovely bride?

*George.* I do.

*Stage Manager.* Do you, Emily, take this man, George, to be your wedded husband . . .

*Mrs. Soames.* Don't know *when* I've seen such a lovely wedding. But I always cry. Don't know why it is, but I always cry. I just like to see young people happy, don't you? Oh, I think it's lovely.

[*The ring. The kiss. The stage is suddenly arrested into silent tableau.*]

*Stage Manager (his eyes on the distance, says to the audience).* I've married two hundred couples in my day. Do I believe in it? I don't know. M\_\_\_\_\_ marries N\_\_\_\_\_. Millions of them. The cottage, the gocart, the Sunday afternoon drives in the Ford, the first rheumatism, the grandchildren, the second rheumatism, the deathbed, the reading of the will — Once in a thousand times it's interesting. Well, let's have Mendelssohn's "Wedding March"!

[*The organ picks up the March. The bride and groom come down the aisle, radiant but trying to be very dignified.*]

*Mrs. Soames.* Aren't they a lovely couple? Oh, I've never been to such a nice wedding. I'm sure they'll be happy. I always say *happiness*, that's the great thing! The important thing is to be happy.

[*The bride and groom reach the steps leading into the audience. A bright light is thrown upon them. They descend into the auditorium and run up the aisle joyously.*]

*Stage Manager.* That's all the second act. Ten minutes' intermission, folks.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY OF ACT II

1. What effect does the dramatist get by having the second act open with the same people and the same activities as the first?
2. Do you attach any importance to the fact that the wedding day was a rainy one?
3. Does the conversation between Emily and George after school help you to understand "how all this began," as the Stage Manager says? Why had Emily resented George's spending all his time at baseball? Do they seem to realize what a serious step they are approaching? Find lines that show that they do realize it, and others that make the two of them sound young and inexperienced. What are some of the things they keep saying are "important"?
4. Why do both the parents and the young couple have spells of reluctance to go on with the wedding? What had been Dr. Gibbs's own terror about getting married? What do you think of his statement that "everybody has a right to his own troubles"?
5. What does Mrs. Soames stand for in the wedding scene? Did you like her, or think she was silly? Notice whether you change your opinion of her any in the last act. She has one definite virtue. See if you can tell what it is.
6. Why does the Stage Manager say that this is a "good" wedding? What does he say every child born into the world is?

## ACT III

*During the intermission the audience has seen the actors arranging the stage. On the right-hand side, a little right of the center, ten or twelve ordinary chairs have been placed in three openly spaced rows facing the audience. These are graves in the cemetery.*

*Toward the end of the intermission the actors enter and take their places. The front row contains, toward the center of the stage, an empty chair; then MRS. GIBBS and SIMON STIMSON. The second row contains, among others, MRS. SOAMES. The third row has WALLY WEBB. The dead sit in a quiet without stiffness and in a patience without listlessness.*

*The STAGE MANAGER takes his accustomed place and waits for the house lights to go down.*

*Stage Manager.* This time nine years have gone by, friends — summer, 1913. Gradual changes in Grover's Corners. Horses are getting rarer. Farmers coming into town in Fords. Chief difference is in



the young people, far as I can see. They want to go to the moving pictures all the time. They want to wear clothes like they see there . . . want to be citified. Everybody locks their house doors now at night. Ain't been any burglars in town yet, but everybody's heard about 'em. But you'd be surprised, though — on the whole, things don't change much at Grover's Corners.

Guess you want to know what all these chairs are here fur. Smarter ones have guessed it already. I don't know how you feel about such things, but this certainly is a beautiful place. It's on a hilltop — a windy hilltop — lots of sky, lots of clouds, often lots of sun and moon and stars. You come up here on a fine afternoon and you can see range on range of hills — awful blue they are — up there by Lake Sunapee and Lake Winnepesaukee . . . and way up, if you've got a glass, you can see the White Mountains and Mt. Washington — where North Conway and Conway is. And, of course, our favorite mountain, Mt. Monadnock's, right here — and all around it lie these towns — Jaffrey, 'n East Jaffrey, 'n Peterborough, 'n Dublin; and (*then, pointing down in the audience*) there, quite a ways down, is Grover's Corners.

Yes, beautiful spot up here. Mountain laurel and li-lacks. I often wonder why people like to be buried in Woodlawn and Brooklyn when they might pass the same time up here in New Hampshire. Over in that corner (*pointing to stage left*) are the old stones — 1670, 1680. Strong-minded people that come a long way to be independent. Summer people walk around there laughing at the funny words on the tombstones . . . it don't do any harm. And genealogists come up from Boston — get paid by city people for looking up their ancestors. They want to make sure they're Daughters of the American Revolution and of the *Mayflower*. . . Well, I guess that don't do any harm, either. Wherever you come near the human race, there's layers and layers of nonsense.

Over there are some Civil War veterans too. Iron flags on their graves. . . . New Hampshire boys . . . had a notion that the Union ought to be kept together, though they'd never seen more than fifty miles of it themselves. All they knew was the name, friends — the United States of America. The United States of America. And they went and died about it.

This here is the new part of the cemetery. Here's your friend, Mrs. Gibbs. 'N let me see — Here's Mr. Stimson, organist at the Congregational Church. And over there's Mrs. Soames, who enjoyed the wedding so — you remember? Oh, and a lot of others. And Editor Webb's boy, Wallace, whose appendix burst while he was on a Boy

Scout trip to Crawford Notch. Yes, an awful lot of sorrow has sort of quieted down up here. People just wild with grief have brought their relatives up to this hill. We all know how it is. And then time . . . and sunny days . . . and rainy days . . . 'n snow . . . tz-tz-tz. We're all glad they're in a beautiful place, and we're coming up here ourselves when our fit's over. This certainly is an important part of Grover's Corners. A lot of thoughts come up here, night and day, but there's no post office.

Now I'm going to tell you some things you know already. You know'm as well as I do, but you don't take'm out and look at'm very often. I don't care what they say with their mouths — everybody knows that *something* is eternal. And it ain't houses, and it ain't names, and it ain't earth, and it ain't even the stars . . . everybody knows in their bones that *something* is eternal, and that something has to do with human beings. All the greatest people ever lived have been telling us that for five thousand years, and yet you'd be surprised how people are always losing hold of it. There's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being. (*Pause*) You know as well as I do that the dead don't stay interested in us living people for very long. Gradually, gradually, they let hold of the earth . . . and the ambitions they had . . . and the pleasures they had . . . and the things they suffered . . . and the people they loved. They get weaned away from earth. That's the way I put it — weaned away. Yes, they stay here while the earth part of 'em burns away, burns out; and all that time they slowly get indifferent to what's goin' on in Grover's Corners.

They're waitin'. They're waitin' for something that they feel is comin'. Something important and great. Aren't they waitin' for the eternal part in them to come out clear? Some of the things they're going to say maybe'll hurt your feelings — but that's the way it is: mother 'n daughter . . . husband 'n wife . . . enemy 'n enemy . . . money 'n miser — all those terribly important things kind of grow pale around here. And what's left? What's left when memory's gone, and your identity, Mrs. Smith? (*He looks at the audience a minute, then turns to the stage.*)

Well! There are some *living* people. There's Joe Stoddard, our undertaker, supervising a new-made grave. And here comes a Grover's Corners boy, that left town to go out West.

[JOE STODDARD *has hovered about in the background. SAM CRAIG enters left, wiping his forehead from the exertion. He carries an umbrella and strolls front.*]

*Sam Craig.* Good afternoon, Joe Stoddard.

*Joe Stoddard.* Good afternoon, good afternoon. Let me see now: Do I know you?

*Sam Craig.* I'm Sam Craig.

*Joe Stoddard.* Gracious sakes' alive! Of all people! I should'a knowed you'd be back for the funeral. You've been away a long time, Sam.

*Sam Craig.* Yes, I've been away over twelve years. I'm in business out in Buffalo now, Joe. But I was in the East when I got news of my cousin's death, so I thought I'd combine things a little and come and see the old home. You look well.

*Joe Stoddard.* Yes, yes, can't complain. Very sad, our journey today, Samuel.

*Sam Craig.* Yes.

*Joe Stoddard.* Yes, yes. I always say I hate to supervise when a young person is taken. I see you brought your umbrella. It's going to rain and make it sadder still, seems like. They'll be here in a few minutes now. I had to come here early today — my son's supervisin' at the home.

*Sam Craig (reading stones).* Old Farmer McCarty. I used to do chores for him — after school. He had the lumbago.

*Joe Stoddard.* Yes, we brought Farmer McCarty here a number of years ago now.

*Sam Craig (staring at MRS. GIBBS'S knees).* Why, this is my Aunt Julia. . . . I'd forgotten that she'd . . . of course, of course.

*Joe Stoddard.* Yes, Doc Gibbs lost his wife two, three, years ago . . . about this time. And today's another pretty bad blow for him, too.

*Mrs. Gibbs (to SIMON STIMSON, in an even voice).* That's my sister Carey's boy, Sam — Sam Craig.

*Simon Stimson.* I'm always uncomfortable when *they're* around.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Simon.

*Simon Stimson.* They and their nonsense and their idiotic glee at being alive.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Simon, be patient.

*Sam Craig.* Do they choose their own verses much, Joe?

*Joe Stoddard.* No . . . not usual. Mostly the bereaved pick a verse.

*Sam Craig.* Doesn't sound like Aunt Julia. There aren't many of those Hersey sisters left now. Let me see. Where are — I wanted to look at my father's and mother's . . .

*Joe Stoddard.* Over there with the Craigs. . . . Avenue F.

*Sam Craig* (reading *SIMON STIMSON's epitaph*). He was organist at church, wasn't he? Hm, drank a lot, we used to say.

*Joe Stoddard*. Nobody was supposed to know about it. He'd seen a peck of trouble. Those musical fellas ain't like the rest of us, I reckon. (*Behind his hand*) Took his own life, y' know?

*Sam Craig*. Oh, did he?

*Joe Stoddard*. Hung himself in the attic. They tried to hush it up, but of course it got around. His wife's just married Senator Barstow. Many a time I've seen her, eleven o'clock at night, goin' around the streets huntin' for her husband. Think o' that! Now she's married to Senator Barstow over at Manchester. He chose his own epy-taph. You can see it there. It ain't a verse exactly.

*Sam Craig*. Why, it's just some notes of music! What is it?

*Joe Stoddard*. Oh, I wouldn't know. It was wrote up in the Boston papers at the time.

*Sam Craig*. Joe, what did she die of?

*Joe Stoddard*. Who?

*Sam Craig*. My cousin.

*Joe Stoddard*. Oh, didn't you know? Had some trouble bringing a baby into the world. Let's see, today's Friday — 'twas almost a week ago now.

*Sam Craig* (*putting up his umbrella*). Did the baby live?

*Joe Stoddard* (*raising his coat collar*). No. 'Twas her second, though. There's a little boy 'bout four years old.

*Sam Craig*. The grave's going to be over there?

*Joe Stoddard*. Yes, there ain't much more room over here among the Gibbsses, so they're opening up a whole new Gibbs section over by Avenue B. You'll excuse me now. I see they're comin'.

*The Dead* (*not lugubrious, and strongly New England in accent*). Rain'll do a lot of good. . . . Yes, reckon things were gettin' downright parched. Don't look like it's goin' to last long, tho'. . . . Lemuel, you remember the floods of seventy-nine? Carried away all the bridges but one.

[*From left to right, at the back of the stage, comes a procession. Four men carry a casket, invisible to us. All the rest are under umbrellas. One can vaguely see DR. GIBBS, GEORGE, the WEBBS, etc. They gather about a grave in the back center of the stage, a little to the left of center.*]

*Mrs. Soames*. Who is it, Julia?

*Mrs. Gibbs* (*without raising her eyes*). My daughter-in-law, Emily Webb.

*Mrs. Soames (a little surprised, but no emotion).* Well, I declare! The road up here must have been awful muddy. What did she die of, Julia?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* In childbirth.

*Mrs. Soames.* Childbirth. (*Almost with a laugh*) I'd forgotten all about that! My, wasn't life awful (*with a sigh*) and wonderful.

*Simon Stimson (with a sideways glance).* Wonderful, was it?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Simon! Now, remember!

*Mrs. Soames.* I remember Emily's wedding. Wasn't it a lovely wedding! And I remember her reading the class poem at graduation exercises. Emily was one of the brightest girls ever graduated from high school. I've heard Principal Wilkins say so time after time. I called on them at their new farm just before I died. Perfectly beautiful farm.

*A Woman from among the Dead.* It's on the same road we lived on.

*A Man among the Dead.* Yes, just near the Elks' picnic grounds. Remember, Joe? By the lake where we always used to go Fourth of July? Right smart farm.

[*They subside. The group by the grave starts singing "Blessed Be the Tie That Binds."*]

*A Woman among the Dead.* I always liked that hymn. I was hopin' they'd sing a hymn.

*A Man among the Dead.* My wife — my second wife — knows all the verses of about every hymn there is. It just beats the Dutch — she can go through them all by heart.

[*Pause. Suddenly EMILY appears from among the umbrellas. She is wearing a white dress. Her hair is down her back and tied by a white ribbon like a little girl's. She comes slowly, gazing wonderingly at THE DEAD, a little dazed. She stops halfway and smiles faintly.*]

*Emily.* Hello.

*Voices among the Dead.* Hello, Emily. H'lo, M's. Gibbs.

*Emily.* Hello, Mother Gibbs.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Emily.

*Emily.* Hello. (*The hymn continues. EMILY looks back at the funeral. She says dreamily*) It's raining.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Yes. . . . They'll be gone soon, dear. Just rest yourself.

[EMILY sits down in the empty chair by MRS. GIBBS.]

Emily. It seems thousands and thousands of years since I . . . How stupid they all look. They don't have to look like that!

Mrs. Gibbs. Don't look at them now, dear. They'll be gone soon.

Emily. Oh, I wish I'd been here a long time. I don't like being new here. . . . How do you do, Mr. Stimson?

Simon Stimson. How do you do, Emily.

[EMILY continues to look about her with a wan and wondering smile, but for a moment her eyes do not return to the funeral group. As though to shut out from her mind the thought of that group, she starts speaking to MRS. GIBBS with a touch of nervousness.]

Emily. Mother Gibbs, George and I have made that farm into just the best place you ever saw. We thought of you all the time. We wanted to show you the new barn and a great long cement drinking fountain for the stock. We bought that out of the money you left us.

Mrs. Gibbs. I did?

Emily. Don't you remember, Mother Gibbs — the legacy you left us? Why, it was over three hundred and fifty dollars.

Mrs. Gibbs. Yes, yes, Emily.

Emily. Well, there's a patent device on this drinking fountain so that it never overflows, Mother Gibbs, and it never sinks below a certain mark they have there. It's fine. (*Her voice trails off, and her eyes return to the funeral group.*) It won't be the same to George without me, but it's a lovely farm. (*Suddenly she looks directly at MRS. GIBBS.*) Live people don't understand, do they?

Mrs. Gibbs. No, dear — not very much.

Emily. They're sort of shut up in little boxes, aren't they? I feel as though I knew them last a thousand years ago. . . . My boy is spending the day at Mrs. Carter's. (*She sees MR. CARTER among THE DEAD.*) Oh, Mr. Carter, my little boy is spending the day at your house.

Mr. Carter. Is he?

Emily. Yes, he loves it there. . . . Mother Gibbs, we have a Ford, too. Never gives any trouble. I don't drive, though. Mother Gibbs, when does this feeling go away? Of being . . . one of them? How long does it . . .

Mrs. Gibbs. Sh! dear. Just wait and be patient.

*Emily (with a sigh).* I know. . . . Look, they're finished. They're going.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Sh. . . .

[*The umbrellas leave the stage. DR. GIBBS comes over to his wife's grave and stands before it a moment. EMILY looks up at his face. MRS. GIBBS does not raise her eyes.*]

*Emily.* Look! Father Gibbs is bringing some of my flowers to you. He looks just like George, doesn't he? Oh, Mother Gibbs, I never realized before how troubled and how . . . how in the dark live persons are. From morning till night that's all they are — troubled.

[*DR. GIBBS goes off.*]

*The Dead.* Little cooler than it was. . . . Yes, that rain's cooled it off a little. Those northeast winds always do the same thing, don't they? If it isn't a rain, it's a three-day blow. . . . Reckon it may clear up before night; often does.

[*A patient calm falls on the stage. The STAGE MANAGER appears at his proscenium pillar, smoking. EMILY sits up abruptly, with an idea.*]

*Emily.* But, Mother Gibbs, one can go back; one can go back there again . . . into living. I feel it. I know it. Why, just then for a moment I was thinking about . . . about the farm . . . and for a minute I *was* there, and my baby was on my lap as plain as day.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Yes, of course you can.

*Emily.* I can go back there and live all those days over again . . . why not?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* All I can say is, Emily, don't.

*Emily (taking a few steps toward the STAGE MANAGER).* But it's true, isn't it? I can go and live . . . back there . . . again.

*Stage Manager.* Yes, some have tried — but they soon come back here.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Don't do it, Emily.

*Mrs. Soames.* Emily, don't. It's not what you think it'd be.

*Emily.* But I won't live over a sad day. I'll choose a happy one — I'll choose the day I first knew that I loved George. Why should that be painful?

[*They are silent. Her question turns to the STAGE MANAGER.*]

*Stage Manager.* You not only live it, but you watch yourself living it.

*Emily.* Yes?

*Stage Manager.* And as you watch it, you see the thing that they — down there — never know. You see the future. You know what's going to happen afterward.

*Emily.* But is that — painful? Why?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* That's not the only reason why you shouldn't do it, Emily. When you've been here longer, you'll see that our life here is our hope that soon we'll forget all that, and think only of what's ahead, and be ready for what's ahead. When you've been here longer, you'll understand.

*Emily (softly).* But, Mother Gibbs, how can I ever forget that life? It's all I know. It's all I had.

[MRS. GIBBS *does not answer.*]

Mr. Stimson, did you go back?

*Simon Stimson (sharply).* No.

*Emily.* Did you, Mrs. Soames?

*Mrs. Soames.* Oh, Emily. It isn't wise. Really, it isn't. All we can do is just warn you. It won't be what you expect.

*Emily (slowly).* But it's a thing I must know for myself. I'll choose a happy day, anyway.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* No. At least, choose an unimportant day. Choose the least important day in your life. It will be important enough.

*Emily (to the STAGE MANAGER).* Then it can't be since I was married, or since the baby was born. I can choose a birthday at least, can't I? . . . I choose my twelfth birthday.

*Stage Manager.* All right. February 11, 1899. A Tuesday. . . . Do you want any special time of day?

*Emily.* Oh. I want the whole day.

*Stage Manager.* We'll begin at dawn. You remember it had been snowing for several days; but it had stopped the night before, and they had begun clearing the roads. The sun's coming up.

*Emily (with a cry).* There's Main Street. . . . Why, that's Mr. Morgan's drugstore before he changed it! . . . And there's the livery stable. (*She walks toward the back of the stage.*)

*Stage Manager.* Yes, it's 1899. This is fourteen years ago.

*Emily.* Oh, that's the town I knew as a little girl. And, look, there's the old white fence that used to be around our house. Oh, I'd forgotten that! Oh, I love it so! Are *they* inside?



*Stage Manager.* Yes, your mother'll be coming downstairs in a minute to make breakfast.

*Emily (softly).* Will she?

*Stage Manager.* And you remember: your father had been away for several days; he came back on the early-morning train.

*Emily.* No . . .

*Stage Manager.* He'd been back to his college to make a speech — in western New York, at Clinton.

*Emily.* Look! There's Howie Newsome. There's our policeman. But he's dead; he died.

[*The STAGE MANAGER retires to his corner. The voices of HOWIE NEWSOME, CONSTABLE WARREN, and JOE CROWELL, JR., are heard at the left of the stage.*]

*Howie Newsome.* Whoa, Bessie! Bessie! . . . Morning, Bill.

*Bill.* Morning, Howie.

*Howie Newsome.* You're up early.

*Bill.* Been rescuin' a party; darn near froze to death, down by Polish Town thar. Got drunk and lay out in the snowdrifts. Thought he was in bed when I shook'm.

*Emily.* Why, there's Joe Crowell.

*Joe Crowell.* Good morning, Mr. Warren. Morning, Howie.

[*MRS. WEBB has appeared in her kitchen, but EMILY does not see her until she calls.*]

*Mrs. Webb.* Chil-dren! Wally! Emily! . . . Time to get up.

*Emily.* Mama, here I am! Oh, how young Mama looks! I didn't know Mama was ever that young. Oh!

*Mrs. Webb.* You can come and dress by the kitchen fire, if you like; but hurry.

[*HOWIE NEWSOME has entered along Main Street and brings the milk to MRS. WEBB'S door.*]

Good morning, Mr. Newsome. Whhhh — it's cold.

*Howie Newsome.* Ten below by my barn, Mrs. Webb.

*Mrs. Webb.* Think of it! Keep yourself wrapped up. (*She takes her bottles in, shuddering.*)

*Emily (with an effort).* Mama, I can't find my blue hair ribbon anywhere.

*Mrs. Webb.* Just open your eyes, dear, that's all. I laid it out for

you special — on the dresser, there. If it were a snake, it would bite you.

*Emily.* Yes, yes. . . . (*She puts her hand on her heart.*)

[MR. WEBB comes along Main Street, where he meets CONSTABLE WARREN.]

*Mr. Webb.* Good morning, Bill.

*Bill.* Good morning, Mr. Webb. You're up early.

*Mr. Webb.* Yes, just been back to my old college in New York State. Been any trouble here?

*Bill.* Well, I was called up this mornin' to rescue a Polish fella — darn near froze to death he was.

*Mr. Webb.* We must get it in the paper.

*Bill.* 'Twan't much.

*Emily (whispers).* Papa.

[MR. WEBB shakes the snow off his feet and enters his house.]

*Mr. Webb.* Good morning, Mother.

*Mrs. Webb.* How did it go, Charles?

*Mr. Webb.* Oh, fine, I guess. I told'm a few things.

*Mrs. Webb.* Did you sit up on the train all night?

*Mr. Webb.* Yes. Never could sleep on a Pullman anyway.

*Mrs. Webb.* Charles, seems to me — we're rich enough so that you could sleep in a train once in a while.

*Mr. Webb.* Everything all right here?

*Mrs. Webb.* Yes — can't think of anything that's happened, special. Been right cold. Howie Newsome says it's ten below over to his barn.

*Mr. Webb.* Yes? Well, it's colder than that at Hamilton College. Students' ears are falling off. It ain't Christian. . . . Paper have any mistakes in it?

*Mrs. Webb.* None that I noticed. Coffee's ready when you want it.

[*He starts upstairs.*]

Charles! Don't forget; it's Emily's birthday. Did you remember to get her something?

*Mr. Webb (patting his pocket).* Yes, I've got something here.

*Mrs. Webb.* Goodness sakes! I hope she likes what I got for her. I hunted hard enough for it. *Children!* Hurry up! Hurry up!

*Mr. Webb.* Where's my girl? Where's my birthday girl? (*He goes off left.*)

*Mrs. Webb.* Don't interrupt her now, Charles. You can see her at breakfast. She's slow enough as it is. Hurry up, children! It's seven o'clock. Now, I don't want to call you again.

*Emily (softly, more in wonder than in grief).* I can't bear it. They're so young and beautiful. Why did they ever have to get old? Mama, I'm here. I'm grown up. I love you all, everything. . . . I can't look at everything hard enough. There's the butternut tree. (*She wanders up Main Street.*) There's Mr. Morgan's drugstore. And there's the high school, for ever and ever and ever. And there's the Congregational Church, where I got married. Oh, dear. Oh, dear. Oh, dear!

[*The STAGE MANAGER beckons partially to her. He points to the house. She says a breathless "yes" and goes to the house.*]

Good morning, Mama.

*Mrs. Webb (at the foot of the stairs, kissing her in a matter-of-fact way).* Well, now, dear, a very happy birthday to my girl and many happy returns. There are some surprises waiting for you on the kitchen table.

*Emily.* Oh, Mama, you shouldn't have. (*She throws an anguished glance at the STAGE MANAGER.*) I can't — I can't.

*Mrs. Webb (facing the audience, over her stove).* But birthday or no birthday, I want you to eat your breakfast good and slow. I want you to grow up and be a good strong girl. (*She goes to the stairs and calls.*) Wally! Wally, wash yourself good. Everything's getting cold down here. (*She returns to the stove with her back to EMILY.*)

[*EMILY opens her parcels.*]

That in the blue paper is from your Aunt Carrie, and I reckon you can guess who brought the post-card album. I found it on the doorstep when I brought in the milk. George Gibbs must have come over in the cold pretty early . . . right nice of him.

*Emily (to herself).* Oh, George! I'd forgotten that.

*Mrs. Webb.* Chew that bacon slow. It'll help keep you warm on a cold day.

*Emily (beginning softly but urgently).* Oh, Mama, just look at me one minute as though you really saw me. Mama, fourteen years have gone by. I'm dead. You're a grandmother, Mama. I married George Gibbs, Mama. Wally's dead, too. Mama, his appendix burst on a camping trip to North Conway. We felt just terrible about it

— don't you remember? But, just for a moment now we're all together. Mama, just for a moment we're happy. Let's look at one another.

*Mrs. Webb.* That in the yellow paper is something I found in the attic among your grandmother's things. You're old enough to wear it now, and I thought you'd like it.

*Emily.* And this is from you. Why, Mama, it's just lovely and it's just what I wanted. It's beautiful! (*She flings her arms around her mother's neck.*)

[*Her mother goes on with her cooking, but is pleased.*]

*Mrs. Webb.* Well, I hoped you'd like it. Hunted all over. Your Aunt Norah couldn't find one in Concord, so I had to send all the way to Boston. (*Laughing*) Wally has something for you, too. He made it at manual-training class, and he's very proud of it. Be sure you make a big fuss about it. Your father has a surprise for you, too; don't know what it is myself. Sh — here he comes.

*Mr. Webb (off stage).* Where's my girl? Where's my birthday girl?

*Emily (in a loud voice to the STAGE MANAGER).* I can't. I can't go on. Oh! Oh. It goes so fast. We don't have time to look at one another. (*She breaks down, sobbing.*)

[*At a gesture from the STAGE MANAGER, MRS. WEBB disappears.*]

I didn't realize. So all that was going on and we never noticed. Take me back — up the hill — to my grave. But first — wait! One more look. Good-by, good-by, world. Good-by, Grover's Corners . . . Mama and Papa. Good-by to clocks ticking . . . and Mama's sunflowers. And food and coffee. And new-ironed dresses and hot baths . . . and sleeping and waking up. Oh, earth, you're too wonderful for anybody to realize you. (*She looks toward the STAGE MANAGER and asks, abruptly, through her tears*) Do any human beings ever realize life while they live it — every, every minute?

*Stage Manager.* No. (*Pause*) The saints and poets, maybe — they do some.

*Emily.* I'm ready to go back. (*She returns to her chair beside MRS. GIBBS.*) Mother Gibbs, I should have listened to you. Now I want to be quiet for a while. . . . Oh, Mother Gibbs, I saw it all. I saw your garden.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Did you, dear?

*Emily.* That's all human beings are! Just blind people.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Look, it's clearing up. The stars are coming out.

*Emily.* Oh, Mr. Stimson, I should have listened to them.

*Simon Stimson (with mounting violence; bitinglly).* Yes, now you know. Now you know! That's what it was to be alive. To move about in a cloud of ignorance, to go up and down trampling on the feelings of those . . . of those about you. To spend and waste time as though you had a million years. To be always at the mercy of one self-centered passion or another. Now you know — that's the happy existence you wanted to go back and see. Did you shout to 'em? Did you call to 'em?

*Emily.* Yes, I did.

*Simon Stimson.* Now you know them as they are: in ignorance and blindness.

*Mrs. Gibbs (spiritedly).* Simon Stimson, that ain't the whole truth and you know it.

[THE DEAD *have begun to stir.*]

*The Dead.* Lemuel, wind's coming up, seems like. . . . Oh, dear, I keep remembering things tonight. . . . It's right cold for June, ain't it?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Look what you've done, you and your rebellious spirit stirring us up here. . . . Emily, look at that star. I forget its name.

*The Dead.* I'm getting to know them all, but I don't know their names. My boy, Joel, was a sailor — knew 'em all. He'd set on the porch evenings and tell 'em all by name. Yes, sir, it was wonderful. A star's mighty good company. Yes, yes. Yes, 'tis.

*Simon Stimson.* Here's one of *them* coming.

*The Dead.* That's funny. 'Taint no time for one of them to be here. Goodness sakes.

*Emily.* Mother Gibbs, it's George.

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Sh, dear. You just rest yourself.

*Emily.* It's George.

[GEORGE *enters from the left and slowly comes toward them.*]

*A Man from among the Dead.* And my boy, Joel, who knew the stars — he used to say it took millions of years for that speck o' light to git to the earth. Don't seem like a body could believe it, but that's what he used to say — millions of years.

*Another.* That's what they say.

[GEORGE *flings himself on EMILY's grave.*]

*The Dead.* Goodness! That ain't no way to behave! He ought to be home.

*Emily.* Mother Gibbs?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* Yes, Emily?

*Emily.* They don't understand much, do they?

*Mrs. Gibbs.* No, dear, not very much.

[*The STAGE MANAGER appears at the right, one hand on a dark curtain which he slowly draws across the scene. In the distance a clock is heard striking the hour very faintly.*]

*Stage Manager.* Most everybody's asleep in Grover's Corners. There are a few lights on. Shorty Hawkins, down at the depot, has just watched the Albany train go by. And at the livery stable somebody's setting up late and talking. . . . Yes, it's clearing up. There are the stars — doing their old, old crisscross journeys in the sky. Scholars haven't settled the matter yet, but they seem to think there are no living beings up there. They're just chalk . . . or fire. Only this one is straining away, straining away all the time to make something of itself. The strain's so bad that every sixteen hours everybody lies down and gets a rest. (*He winds his watch.*) Hm. . . . Eleven o'clock in Grover's Corners. . . . You get a good rest, too. Good night.

[THE END]

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY OF ACT III

1. Would the last act, with the dead sitting in rows of chairs, have "gone over" as well if it had been first? Why does its place at the last make it less of a strain on the audience's imagination?

2. Have you ever thought that poetry about death and immortality was unnecessarily obscure? Read the Stage Manager's speech on page 791 on this subject. Is the thought poetic? Does it lose anything from being simply expressed?

3. In a novel written earlier than *Our Town*, Wilder tells a short incident about a man who, like Emily, was given permission after his death to go back to earth for one day — the least eventful day in his life. But he soon begged to be allowed to rejoin the dead because he "saw that the living, too, are dead and that we can only be said to be alive in those moments when our hearts are conscious of our treasure." Is this the same effect as Emily's return had on her, or a different one? Find Emily's own sad comment on earthly life and compare the two. Do you think reading the

play will make you a little more aware of the many little kindnesses, the unnoticed goodness in your own life?

4. Why are the Stage Manager's last gesture and last words a particularly appropriate ending for the play?

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY ON THE WHOLE PLAY

1. Why has the dramatist limited the incidents he presents to simple happenings that occur frequently? Find a passage in the first act in which the Stage Manager explains exactly what he is trying to show.

2. The dialogue in this play is never intended to be new or original. It is not a surprise at something new but a chuckle over an old familiar saying that gives the play its flavor. Can you think of some remarks in the play that you have heard many, many times?

3. One writer in reviewing *Our Town* said, "In the day of great language in the theater, paint and canvas were missing. Great language cannot hold its own against the weight of papier-mâché. . . . It is because there are no painted houses that audiences see so clearly the beauty of [Wilder's] language. It is because there is no canvas hill on the stage that Mr. Wilder has the opportunity to give us eternity." Do you agree? Find passages of "great language" that take the place of paint and canvas.

4. The Stage Manager solves completely some of the problems of the dramatist, listed in "A Guide to Drama" (see pages 726-27), and he helps on all four. Can you tell how?

### *For Ambitious Students*

5. In Dickinson's *Chief Contemporary Dramatists*, second series, you can find a play in the Chinese tradition, *The Yellow Jacket*, by Hazelton and Benrimo. Get some of the class to read it and compare the Chinese Property Man with Wilder's Stage Manager. Other students can read about the chorus of Greek drama in the encyclopedia and see how the Stage Manager is kin to the chorus.

6. If you were to choose a "Stage Manager" on this pattern to supervise a play about your own home town or city, what sort of person would you select? Would Carl Sandburg make a good one for Chicago? Walter Winchell for New York?

7. Try your hand at writing an opening speech for the Stage Manager for your own home community, and let him describe briefly two families whose life would be typical of your community as the Webbs and Gibbsses are typical of Grover's Corners.

8. Before writing *Our Town*, Wilder had tried out in short plays some of the dramatic experiments that give special interest to the long play. Let

three different students read *The Long Christmas Dinner*, *Pullman Car Hiawatha*, and *The Happy Journey to Trenton and Camden* (all published in the volume *The Long Christmas Dinner*) to discover what experiments are carried over from these plays to *Our Town*.

9. If you have seen the screen production or heard the radio version of *Our Town*, compare them with the play as to use of "flash-backs," "cut-ins," and other techniques. How were the endings different? Which of the three versions appealed to you most? Why?

## SHERWOOD ANDERSON (1876- )

Behind the writings of Sherwood Anderson are years of experience with a wide variety of places and occupations. He was born in Camden, Ohio, moved about a good deal with his rather nomadic family, and spent most of his boyhood in Clyde, Ohio. At twelve he went to work; and after his mother's death when he was fourteen, his formal schooling ceased. Work in factories and as a mechanic occupied him until he joined the army to fight in the Spanish-American War. After his return from Cuba, he was for several years manager of a paint factory in Ohio; but he became increasingly dissatisfied with industrialism. One day he simply got up and walked out of that life, with the remark, "I am walking in the bed of a river." He went to Chicago and soon was a member of the literary circle that included Ben Hecht, Theodore Dreiser, and Carl Sandburg. Later he lived for a while in the Ozarks, and at another time in New Orleans. Now he has settled down in Marion, Virginia, where he edits two newspapers — one Republican and one Democratic.

Most of Anderson's work has been in novels, short stories, and autobiographical books. Recently he has been interested in the drama, and that interest, united with his concern for problems in textile factories and communities, led to the writing of his radio play *Textiles*.

## TEXTILES

### *A Radio Play*

In this play Sherwood Anderson has dramatized with wonderful directness the great problem brought by development of more efficient machinery — the need for a system that will bring plenty for all mankind out of increased production by modern industrial methods. Here are the old fears and the sad temporary defeats of the human struggle for happiness. But here, too, is faith in man's ability to plan a way to the age of plenty.



It is significant that the false prophet who preaches destruction of the whole system brought by machinery is drowned out by the democratic chorus of workers who believe in their ability to achieve happiness for all.

It is peculiarly appropriate that this play dealing with the changes in human life wrought by man's endless inventions should have been written for one of the most miraculous of those inventions, the radio. Notice how a variety of individual voices, the chorus of the weavers, and many sound effects are blended to take advantage of the way attention, freed from sight, becomes more sensitive to all kinds of sound.

STATION ANNOUNCEMENTS. *We have here a short play that sings the song of the weavers, the clothmakers. Weaving is one of man's oldest crafts. It may have started even before man began stirring the ground and scattering seeds. Man came naked into a cold and a hot world. In spite of the richness of our age there are still millions of men, women, and children miserably clad, but man's cunning brain has made the machines that can now clothe all mankind. Here come the weavers, the clothmakers.*

[*There is heard the sound of men's and women's footsteps approaching.*]

*Voice (a woman).* What's this? Where are we?

*Voice (a man).* Why have you brought us into this room?

*Voice (a woman).* What are these little disks?

*Voice (a man).* These little disks are microphones. Speak; sing into them; tell your story. The air is free. Your voices will carry far. Out over the states men, women, and children will be sitting in their houses and listening.

*Voice (another man).* The microphone is also a part of the new world. It is a new wonder like the loom, when man first invented it. It is brother to the great cloth mills, with the millions of singing spindles, the thousands of dancing looms.

*Voice (a woman).* The radio is still strange, a wonder to us; but think how strange and ever terrible must have seemed the first power loom.

*Chorus (men's and women's voices).*

The great woolen mills.  
The spinners of yarn,  
Of silk,  
Of linen,  
Of rayon.

[*The above is a chant. It breaks off.*]

*Voice (a man)*. But wait. But wait. You must begin far back. You must tell the story of cloth. Tell them who you are. Yours is a workers' story. If you sing, sing first of beginnings.

*Chorus*. Oho! Oho!

We are the men and women of cloth.

We are the weavers.

We are the makers of cloth.

We are of one of the oldest crafts in the world.

The pride of the old workers is ours.

*Voice (a man)*. Ours is the old, old story of the workers. It began with heavy, brutal labor. Our fathers were brothers to the low-browed man with the hoe.

*Voice (another man)*. But a few began to think. They used their brains. Inventions began. Man was naked and cold. From the time of Adam, or whoever it was who first walked the earth, conscious of manhood, man has felt the bitterness of cold winds and the burning heat of the sun.

*Chorus*.

We, the weavers, began when first man began to dig in the earth. When seeds were first scattered over the earth, we began.

We began with the wool of sheep.

We followed on the heels of those who clothed themselves with hides and furs.

We were among the first to grasp new tools with our hands.

We kept on getting new knowledge.

*Voice (a man)*. When the cotton plant was found, we made the fiber of the cotton boll into cloth.

*Voice (another man)*. We took the wild flax from the field. We broke it. We ripped out the fiber. We made linen. A long time later with the help of the scientist we made cloth of wood. We made cloth of rayon.

*Voice (a man)*. We made the first machines. We made the distaff. We carded the wool. We made the spinning wheel. We built the first looms. We ran the looms with our hands and our feet.

*Voice (a woman)*. But some were afraid, some protested. They were afraid man would be robbed of his work.

*Voice (another woman)*. They are still afraid. It is fear that makes men ugly. They are afraid of the great modern machines. Look now far back — to the sixteenth century.

[*There is heard the low murmur of angry voices of men and women in the distance.*]

*Voice (a woman).* Kill the inventor.

*Voice (a man).* Destroy the loom.

[*Sound of a struggle — low, in the distance. It dies down.*]

*Voice (another man).* Listen. It is the mayor of the old city of Danzig speaking. It is the year fifteen hundred and twenty-nine. A man has invented a loom that will weave fifty ribbons at once. The people are furious with fear. "We will lose our work," they cry.

[*Again the sound of struggle in the distance, machinery being broken, angry voices*]

*Voice (louder — a man).* Stop! Stop. (*Sound of struggle stops.*) Inventor, I sentence you to be beheaded. We will destroy your loom. We will go back to the old way.

*Chorus (laughter).*

Ha! Ha!

The old way.

The old way.

Back! Back!

Man can never go back!

*Voice (a woman).* There was sweetness in the old way. The women made cloth for their families. There were no power looms. They did it all by hand. Listen, you will hear the song of the wheel.

[*There is heard a soft whirling sound, and women's voices are heard chattering softly. This is simply a murmuring sound. The words are not distinct. The voices are soft, as of women contentedly working together. There is an occasional soft laughter.*]

*Voice (a woman).* I shall make my daughter a dress. It is for her marriage day.

*Voice (another woman).* But, Mary, it takes so long. If it were me, I wouldn't wait.

[*Sound of soft women's laughter*]

*Voice (a woman — louder).* Compared with our age, the age of the wheel and the hand loom was a simple age.

*Chorus.*

When we weavers began, how could we look into the future?

We wove cloth for our neighbors.

There were no fast ships, no railroads, no steamboats.

The great machines had not come.

It was the day of the ox and the cart.

*Voice (a man)*. Look. Who is this coming?

*Voice (a woman)*. It is the prophet of fear.

*Voice (another woman)*. It is the prophet of defeat.

*Voice (another woman)*. It is he who says nothing can be done.

*Voice (another woman)*. He is always saying human nature cannot be changed.

*Voice (another woman)*. It is he who says all man's efforts must end in defeat.

*Voice (another woman)*. He thinks life isn't worth living.

*Voice (another woman)*. How old he looks.

*Voice (another woman)*. How sour he looks.

*Voice (a man)*. He croaks like the croak of a frog.

*Voice (another man — this is to be a croaking, complaining voice)*. So, here you are — children of hope, eh? Fools, you would do better to listen to me.

*Voice (a man — answering)*. Hello, croaker — prophet of defeat. What's eating you now?

*Croaker*. So you have begun to sing of an age of plenty, eh? You had better listen to me. It would have been better for man to let all tools alone. The tools led to the machines. The machines will destroy you.

*Voice (a man)*. Yes, croaker — man of fear, we are here to sing of a new day. The machine will clothe man as he was never clothed before.

*Voice (a woman)*. There will come the age of plenty.

*Voice (a man)*. All will be clothed.

*Voice (a woman)*. My mother, a worker, had one new dress in three years.

*Voice (another woman)*. It took my grandmother nearly a year to make the cloth for a dress.

*Chorus*.

The age of plenty may already be here.

We can already do it.

All can be beautifully clothed.

Already a river of beautiful cloth can flow out of our mills.

*Voice (a man)*. The mills should never stop.

*Voice (another man)*. Men and women should walk in pride — filled with the pride of man's accomplishments.

*Chorus.* Let the millions of spindles sing.  
Let the looms dance with joy.  
Let the river of cloth flow.  
The day of plenty is here.

[*Again the croaking, complaining voice is heard.*]

*Croaking Voice.* The machine will destroy you all. Man has invented the loom. From the first the loom has thrown man out of his work. When you rob a man of his work, you destroy him. Listen.

[*The voice quits talking, and there is a sound of the clatter of hand looms. Complaining voices are heard above the clatter.*]

*Voice (a woman).* But we cannot get the cloth we help to make. We are of the old workers. We are poor and miserably clad.

*Voice (another woman).* The mills close. They are dark and silent, and we walk the streets in fear.

*Voice (a man).* They say we do not want to work.

*Chorus.* It is a lie, a lie.

*Croaker (His voice now high and sharp — a sneer in it).* I told you. I told you. There is but one hope. Destroy it all. Go back. Go back. Go back to the day of the handwork.

*Voice (a woman).* No. No. Never the old days. They put me at work when I was a child of eight. I worked from daylight till dark, summer and winter. Before I was a woman grown, I was already worn out.

*Voice (a man).* How could such women, the weavers of the old days, be good wives? How could they be good mothers?

*Voice (a woman).* I was ragged. I was almost naked. I made cloth, but I went always in rags. The new day is already a thousand times better than that.

*Croaker.* I tell you again that it will be better to destroy the looms.

*Chorus.* We'll never do it. We'll solve it. We'll solve it.

*Croaker.* The machine is taking man from his work.

*Chorus.* We will find a way. We will find a way.

*Croaker.* Those who cannot work will starve.

*Chorus.* With the new machines there is also food for all.

*Croaker.* It would have been better for man to let all tools and machines alone.

*Chorus.* It is the machine that will make the new age — the age of plenty.

*Croaker.* I tell you the machine will destroy you all.

[*The CROAKING VOICE is interrupted.*]

*Voice (a man).* Listen, men and women, you workers, will you accept the voice of defeat?

*Voice (a woman).* But sometimes we are afraid.

*Voice (a man).* Come on, let us keep to the story. Let us tell them that we workers are builders.

*Chorus.* We want the new world. We have the machines. We want all men and women beautifully clothed.

*Voice (a man).* But wait. Go on with the story.

*Chorus.* Now the day of the hand loom has passed.

Life is speeding up.

Men are working.

Men are thinking.

Man has discovered the power in steam.

The motor is coming.

Man has applied power to the looms.

How the looms dance.

Faster, faster, faster.

*Voice (a man).* Ha! Now we have freed ourselves from the heavy, brutal labor. We have come out of the dark little rooms. The great light, singing factories are building. The work is lighter.

*Chorus.* Faster, faster, faster.

*Voice (a woman).* See the river of cloth flow.

*Voice (a man).* It is a river, a Mississippi of cloth.

*Voice (a woman).* Look — it is my daughter going to church.

*Voice (another woman).* My daughter is going to her wedding.

*Voice (a man).* Now at night, when I return from work, my bed is covered with warm blankets.

*Voice (a woman).* How white and soft the sheets.

*Chorus.*

Now we have many new and beautiful kinds of cloth.

We have soft and beautiful cloth of cotton,

Of silk,

Of wool,

Of linen,

Of rayon.

We make  
  Damasks,  
  Chiffons,  
  Jerseys,  
  Crepe.

We make  
  Lace and tapestries,  
  Zephyrs and brocades,  
  Tweeds and muslins,  
  Velvets and satins.

We will make hundreds, thousands of new kinds of cloth.

*Croaker.* Ha! I tell you the machines will destroy you. Look. Now the looms grow in number. Man has found the secret of power. Listen and you will hear the clatter of the new looms. They will rob more and more men of their work. I tell you when you rob man of his work you destroy him. Listen. Fools. Fools. You will be kicked into the streets. You will be turned out of your houses. The machines will fix you.

*Voice (a woman).* It is true, true.

*Croaker.* Ha, you thought you were smart. You racked your brains, making always more and more machines. You discovered the power of steam, of electricity. You harnessed rivers. You made the great mills. You thought you were smart.

*Voice (a man).* But we wanted to make an end of poverty, of fear.

*Croaker.* And you only threw yourselves out of work. I told you. Ha! Fools. Fools. You had better destroy the machines. Destroy the factories.

*Voice (a man).* He may be right. More and more of us are being thrown out of work.

*Voice (a woman).* He is right. I worked and saved to educate my son. I sent him to college. Now he can find no work.

*Voice (a man).* All they talk of is relief. We do not want relief. We are men. We want our work.

*Croaker.* I told you. I told you. Come on. Do as I say. Break up the machines. Destroy. Destroy.

*Voices.* No. No.

*Other Voices.* Yes. Yes. Come on. Come on.

[*There is a loud, intense sound of struggle — cries of pain — the sound of hammers against metal, of glass being broken. It becomes*

*a strong metallic laugh. It is broken by the loud, sharp sound of a factory whistle — and then silence.]*

*Voice (a woman).* It was a mistake. It can't be done that way.

*Voice (a man).* Man cannot destroy the work of his own hands.

*Voice (a woman).* It is cowardly, cowardly.

*Voice (another woman).* We have come out of darkness and poverty. We cannot go back.

*Voice (a man — angry).* You croaker — you are a fool. You are a false leader.

*Voice (a woman).* There are too many false leaders.

*Voice (a man).* Let us kill the croaker. Let us kill fear.

*[There is heard the low rumbling sound, as though of a mob forming.]*

*Voice (a woman — pleading).* No. Please. There has been too much killing. It is too brutal. It solves nothing. It has gone on too long.

*Croaker.* Ha. Fools. Fools. You cannot kill me. You cannot kill fear. Fear will win. Better destroy. There is joy in destruction.

*Voice (a man).* It is true that we are being thrown out of work.

*Voice (a woman).* But we can bring such richness into the world.

*Voice (another woman).* There are so many millions of us — of us, the workers.

*Voice (a man).* Where are the thinkers? We want thinkers now. We want the best brains in the world.

*Voice (a woman).* Let them quit thinking of new machines for a time. Let them think of us.

*Voice (another woman).* Men are always talking of the new world, the better life for all, the good life.

*Chorus.* It is coming.

It is coming.

The machines are a part of it.

The machines are making it.

Do not lose courage.

*Croaker.* Pipedreams. Pipedreams. You are fools, fools. Destroy. Go back. Go back. Go back. Go back. Destroy. Destroy. Go back. Go back.

*[The voice of the CROAKER has become a chant. It merges into a new sound — the sound of men marching. The marching rhythm drowns out the voice of the CROAKER. The march stops.]*



*Voice (a woman).* Look. Who are these? Look. The whole earth, as far as the eyes can see, is covered with men and women. They are marching.

*Voice (another woman).* Who are they? Where are they going?

[*Again is heard the sharp, loud sound of a factory whistle and the heavy, rhythmic sound of marching. It stops again.*]

*Voice (a woman).* Who are you? Tell us. Who are you?

*Voice (a man).* We are the textile workers of the new day. We are going to the factories. We are going to make more and more cloth. We are the men and women of the age of plenty.

*Chorus (loud and clear as though a great army of men and women were shouting).*

We are the makers of textiles.

We make cloth of cotton,  
Of silk,  
Of wool,  
Of linen,  
Of rayon.

We make  
Damasks,  
Chiffons,  
Jerseys,  
Crepe.

We make  
Lace and tapestries,  
Zephyrs and brocades,  
Tweeds and muslins,  
Velvets and satins.

We will make hundreds, thousands of new kinds of cloth.

*Croaker.* You are fools. You are the new slaves of the machines.

*Chorus (as above).*

We are the ones who will free men.

We will clothe all men, all women, all children.

We will clothe them with rich, many-colored cloth.

*Croaker.* You are marchers, marching to your own destruction.

*Chorus (as above).*

We have been leaderless, but will find leaders.

We want only to work.

We are the clothmakers.

We make cloth of cotton,

Of silk,

Of wool,

Of linen,

Of rayon.

We make

Damasks,

Chiffons,

Jerseys,

Crepe.

We make

Lace and tapestries,

Zephyrs and brocades,

Tweeds and muslins,

Velvets and satins.

We will make hundreds, thousands of new kinds of cloth.

*Croaker.* You are a mob of fools. Be yourselves. Quit pipedreaming. Turn back. Destroy the machines before they destroy you. Turn back. Turn back. Turn back. Turn back.

*[The CROAKER'S voice becomes a chant. It is drowned in a loud outbreak of laughter.]*

Laugh. Laugh. I will laugh last. You'll see. You'll see. The machines will throw you all out of work. Confess it. You all hate the factories. Go now and destroy them.

*Voice (a man).* Let the marchers speak. Do you hate your work? Do you hate the factories?

*Voices (this is a great shout).* No.

*Chorus.*

Why should we be afraid?

Look what we have already done.

The day of the heavy, brutal, degrading labor has passed.

Listen to the singing of the motors.

[*The singing, purring song of motors is heard.*]

Listen to the factories and mills calling us.

[*There is an outburst of factory whistles.*]

We are the children of the factories.

The factories are our children.

We have come out of the dark little rooms.

We have come out of rags and nakedness.

The march of men is long, long.

*Croaker.* Man is marching to defeat. He is marching to destruction.

*Voice (a woman).* Our story is a long one. It is true we have come up slowly out of the darkness.

*Voice (a man).* The whole story of man could be told in the story of our work, in the story of textiles.

*Voice (a woman).* When first we began to make cloth, the traders took it.

*Voice (a man).* The traders floated in boats down rivers to trade with strange tribes.

*Voice (a woman).* It was thus we first began to hear of other peoples.

*Voice (a man).* Treaties were made. Nations began to form.

*Voice (a woman).* Ships began to sail the seven seas carrying our textiles.

*Voice (a man).* Columbus, when he sailed into the West, took bales of brightly colored cloth.

*Voice (a woman).* Venice became great. The ships of Venice sailed over the known world, taking the work of our hands, bringing home treasure.

*Croaker.* Yeah! Yeah! And the rich got richer. The poor got poorer. Misery grew. It will always grow. The machines will destroy you. Power will destroy you.

*Chorus.* Knowledge was growing, slowly, slowly.

England became the mistress of the seas.

What did it?

It was the work of our hands.

England became the workshop of the world.

The power loom had come.

There were always more and more mills.

They loaded the ships with the work of our hands.

*Croaker.* Yeah! They would not let their looms be sent out to America. They had to be brought out by stealth. What did it lead to? It led to war, war, war. The machines lead to nothing but wars.

*Chorus.* We fought.

We got our freedom.

We made a new nation.

We made America.

We built our own ships.

We filled them with the works of our own hands.

*Voice (a woman).* We clothed those who went into the West to open the land.

*Voice (a man).* The mills of New England went down into the South.

*Voice (a woman).* Life changed in the North, in the South. The cities grew.

*Voice (a man).* There were new cities, new towns of workers.

*Croaker.* And all the time you were destroying yourselves.

*Chorus.*

All the time we were bringing the age of plenty.

Faster and faster our fingers flew.

Faster and faster the million spindles.

Faster and faster the looms were dancing.

More and more mills.

More and more mills.

Hear the singing of the mills.

[*All this to be accompanied by a soft purring sound of machines humming smoothly.*]

We were making more and more cloth of cotton,

Of silk,

Of wool,

Of linen,

Of rayon.

We have

Damasks,

Chiffons,

Jerseys,

Crepe.

We have  
Lace and tapestries,  
Zephyrs and brocades,  
Tweeds and muslins,  
Velvets and satins.

We will make hundreds, thousands of new kinds of cloth.

[*All this still accompanied by the singing sound of the machines.*]

*Croaker.* Fools. Fools. Stop it. Stop it. Will you never learn what fools you are? You have got more and more mills, but you have got also strikes and lockouts. The new machines throw more and more of you out of work. As I told you long ago, you are marching to your own destruction. There will be no work. No work. No work.

[*Again the above becomes a chant that is presently drowned out by the singing of the machines that become louder. Then again silence.*]

*Chorus.* When the crops of the farmer fail, he does not quit plowing the ground.

*Voice (a man).* He is a farmer. He plows again when the spring showers soften the ground.

*Voice (a man).* We are clothmakers. We will make cloth.

*Chorus.* We will find a way. We will find a way.

*Voice (a woman).* Already we have mills to clothe the world.

*Voice (a woman).* We will make more and more beautiful cloth for men and women.

*Chorus.* Let the mills hum.

Let the cloth pour out.

Let there be a great river of cloth.

Let us have a Mississippi of cloth.

*Voice (a man).* Now let the thinkers think.

*Voice (a woman).* Let the planners plan.

*Chorus.* Give attention to us.

We are the makers of cloth.

Plant the fields.

Grow the cotton.

Grow the flax.

Make the rayon.

Turn the sheep loose on the hills.

Our land is rich.  
Let us march into the age of plenty.

Think.

Work.

Plan.

Think.

Work.

Plan.

*Croaker.* Ha! Pipedreams. Pipedreams. Pipedreams.

[*The CROAKER's voice is drowned in a great outburst of laughter.*]

*Chorus.* From a few, working in dark little rooms we workers in cloth, in textiles, have become millions.

*Voice (a man).* Listen.

*Voice (a woman).* Listen. You will hear the voice of the new day. You will hear the voice of the age of plenty.

*Chorus.* We will in some way make it. We will make it. We will make it.

*Voice.* We will make the good life for our children, our sons, our daughters.

*Voice (a man).* The day of plenty can already be made.

*Voice.* Listen to the song of the day of plenty. Listen to the song of the factories.

*Chorus (singing a verse from a hymn).*

Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Day;

We are trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;

We have loosed the mighty power of the factories grim and gray;

Our truth is marching on.

[*The factory whistles begin to sound off. The effect is that of one of the circus calliopes that used to go in circus parades through the streets of American towns. The whistles break into the tune of the song "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." The sound is accompanied by cheers, and a loud voice rises above the din.*]

*Voice.* March, men. March, women.

*Voice (a woman — loud and shrill above the din).* March to the mills. March toward the age of plenty.

[*The play ends with the heavy sound of marching feet, accompanied by the shrill sound of factory whistles and the cheering of the*

*marchers. At the last these sounds should grow a little dim, as though the marchers were pouring into the factories. Then a solitary voice.]*

*Voice (that of a woman singing).*

We are the makers of cloth, of textiles.

We want to help make the age of plenty.

We are not afraid of work.

We are not afraid of the factories, of the machines,

Help us, thinkers.

Planners, plan for us.

We are the makers of cloth of cotton,

Of silk,

Of wool,

Of linen,

Of rayon.

We make

Damasks,

Chiffons,

Jerseys,

Crepe.

We make

Lace and tapestries,

Zephyrs and brocades,

Tweeds and muslins,

Velvets and satins.

We will make hundreds, thousands of new kinds of cloth.

*[The song dies, and in the distance is heard the sound of tramping feet, and cheers, growing more and more faint. At the last — in the distance, faintly a song comes from the workers.]*

He has sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat;

He is sifting out the hearts of men before His judgment seat;

O be swift, my soul, to answer Him! be jubilant my feet;

Our day is marching on.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Does the play give you any new ideas or information about the trade of weaving? What are they? Some member of the class may have a little hand-loom which he can bring to class to show how the trade started. Have you seen pictures of the great modern machines which weave "rivers of cloth"?

2. What repeated argument of the Croaker against the machine has the greatest basis in fact? What is the only remedy he suggests? Why is it an impossible one to support?

3. What is the vision that keeps up the hope of the weavers? What memories of olden times support their faith in the new order? Why is the optimistic attitude that the problems can be solved more impressive coming from the chorus of weavers than it would be if a single leader expressed it? What do the weavers say must be done if the problem is to be solved?

4. Does the play make you any more sympathetic with the workers who do not get enough of their products to meet their own needs? Do you think that we really can work out a system whereby all men who want to work can find a job, in spite of the machine's increasing ability to do the work of many men? What will be your own part in solving the problem?

5. How is the radio play freer than the stage play? What has this dramatist done that could not be done in a stage play? Do you find the radio play an easier type of reading than other drama? Can you tell why?

*For Ambitious Students*

6. It should be an interesting project to work this play up orally as if for a broadcast. If you have a verse choir, it can present effectively the chorus of the weavers. Listen carefully to your classmates' voices before assigning the individual speaking parts. The boys with a mechanical turn can have a great time working up the sound effects. If your school has a public-address system, you can give the play over it, working behind a drawn curtain.

## FOR FURTHER READING OF PLAYS

## FULL-LENGTH PLAYS

Anderson, Maxwell, *Elizabeth the Queen; Mary of Scotland*  
Austin, Mary, *The Arrowmaker*  
Barry, Philip, *Holiday; You and I; The Youngest*  
Beach, Lewis, *The Goose Hangs High*  
Belasco, David, *The Return of Peter Grimm*  
Brown, Alice, *Children of Earth*



- Connelly, Marc, *Green Pastures*  
 Craven, Frank, *The First Year; New Brooms*  
 Crothers, Rachel, *He and She; Mary the Third; Expressing Willie*  
 Fitch, Clyde, *Nathan Hale; Captain Jinks of the Horse Marines; The Climbers; The Truth; The Girl with the Green Eyes*  
 Gale, Zona, *Miss Lulu Bett*  
 Gillette, William, *Held by the Enemy; Secret Service*  
 Goldsmith, Clifford, *What a Life*  
 Goodrich, Arthur, *So This Is London; Mr. Grant*  
 Green, Paul, *The Field God; Johnny Johnson*  
 Housum, Robert, *The Gypsy Trail*  
 Howard, Bronson, *Shenandoah*  
 Howard, Sidney, *The Late Christopher Bean*  
 Howard, Sidney, and De Kruif, Paul, *Yellow Jack*  
 Kaufman, G. S., and Connelly, Marc, *Dulcy; Merton of the Movies; Beggar on Horseback; To the Ladies*  
 Kaufman, G. S., and Ferber, Edna, *Minick; The Royal Family*  
 Kaufman, G. S., and Hart, Moss, *You Can't Take It with You; The American Way*  
 Klein, Charles, *The Lion and the Mouse*  
 MacKaye, Percy, *The Scarecrow; The Canterbury Pilgrims; A Thousand Years Ago; Jeanne d'Arc; Washington, the Man Who Made Us; Yankee Fantasies*  
 Millay, E. St. V., *The King's Henchman; The Lamp and the Bell*  
 Moody, W. V., *The Great Divide; The Faith Healer*  
 Odets, Clifford, *Awake and Sing; Golden Boy*  
 Peabody, J. P., *The Piper; Marlowe; The Wolf of Gubbio*  
 Pollock, Channing, *The Fool; The Enemy*  
 Sherwood, R. E., *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*  
 Smith, H. J., *A Tailor-Made Man; Mrs. Bumpstead-Leigh*  
 Thomas, Augustus, *The Witching Hour; The Copperhead; As a Man Thinks; In Mizzoura*  
 Van Dyke, Henry, *The House of Rimmon*

## PLAYS BY ENGLISHMEN ABOUT AMERICA

- Drinkwater, John, *Abraham Lincoln; Robert E. Lee*  
 Zangwill, Israel, *The Melting Pot*

## ONE-ACT PLAYS

- Anderson, Maxwell, *The Feast of Ortolans; Second Overture*  
 Bangs, J. K., *A Proposal under Difficulties; The Real Thing*  
 Bayly, J. W., *Never No Third Degree; The Maker of Laws*  
 Bomstead, Beulah, *The Diabolical Circle*  
 Brown, Alice, *Joint Owners in Spain*

- Bynner, Witter, *The Little King*  
 Cameron, Margaret, *The Teeth of the Gift Horse; The Burglar*  
 Cowles, Albert, *The Killers*  
 Davies, M. C., *The Slave with Two Faces*  
 Davis, R. H., *Miss Civilization; The Zone Police*  
 Dix, B. M., *Allison's Lad*  
 Downs, Oliphant, *The Maker of Dreams*  
 Eaton, W. P., *The Purple Doorknob*  
 Field, Rachel, *Wisdom Teeth; Three Pills in a Bottle*  
 Firkins, Oscar, *Two Passengers for Chelsea, and Other Plays*  
 Gale, Zona, *Neighbors; Uncle Jimmy*  
 Gerstenberg, Alice, *Overtones; The Pot Boiler; The Unseen* (all in her  
*Ten One-Act Plays*)  
 Glaspell, Susan, *Trifles* (in her *Short Plays*)  
 Goodman, K. S., *Dust of the Road*  
 Goodman, K. S., and Hecht, Ben, *The Wonder Hat*  
 Green, Paul, *The Last of the Lowries; The Lord's Will; The No 'Count*  
*Boy; Alma Mater; Saturday Night; White Dresses*  
 Hall, Holworthy (H. E. Porter), and Middlemass, Pierre, *The Valiant*  
 Hawkridge, Winifred, *The Florist Shop*  
 Hopkins, Arthur, *Moonshine*  
 Howells, W. D., *The Parlor Car; The Sleeping Car; The Mouse-Trap;*  
*A Likely Story; Five O'Clock Tea* (all in his *Polite Farces*)  
 Hughes, Babette, *Three Men and a Boat; If the Shoe Pinches; One Egg*  
 Hughes, Glenn, *Babbitt's Boy; For the Love of Michael*  
 Kreymborg, Alfred, *Manikin and Minikin; Lima Beans; The House That*  
*Jack Didn't Build; Privilege and Privation*  
 McFadden, Elizabeth, *Why the Chimes Rang*  
 Mackay, C. D., *The Beau of Bath; The Christmas Guest; The Silver*  
*Lining; Benjamin Franklin, Journeyman*  
 MacKaye, Percy, *Gettysburg*  
 MacLeish, Archibald, *Air Raid; The Fall of the City*  
 MacMillan, Mary, *The Shadowed Star; A Fan and Two Candlesticks; The*  
*Ring*  
 Millay, E. St. V., *Aria da Capo; Two Slatterns and a King*  
 Morley, Christopher, *Good Theater; Thursday Evening; The Rehearsal*  
 Peabody, J. P., *Fortune and Men's Eyes*  
 Shaw, Irwin, *Bury the Dead*  
 Stone, Weldon, *A Darksome Furriner; Mammon and the Whittler*  
 Tarkington, Booth, *The Trysting-Place; The Ghost Story; Beauty and the*  
*Jacobin; Bimbo the Pirate; The Travelers; Station YYYY*  
 Walker, Stuart, *The Birthday of the Infanta; Sir David Wears a Crown*  
 (both in his *Portmanteau Adaptations*); *The Trimplet; Nevertheless;*  
*The Medicine Show; Six Who Pass While the Lentils Boil* (all in his  
*Portmanteau Plays*)

- Wilde, Percival, *Blood of the Martyrs; Dawn; Gadgets; Whai Never Dies; Pawns*  
 Wolff, O. M., *Where but in America?*  
 Young, Stark, *The Twilight Saint*

## COLLECTIONS EMPHASIZING AMERICAN PLAYS

- Baker, G. P., *Modern American Plays; Harvard Plays; Yale One-Act Plays*  
 Clark, B. H., and Nicholson, Kenyon, *The American Scene*  
 Clark, B. H., and Cook, T. R., *One-Act Plays*  
 Cohen, H. L., *Longer Plays by Modern Authors; One-Act Plays; More One-Act Plays*  
 Dickinson, T. H., *Chief Contemporary Dramatists* (three series); *Representative One-Act Plays*  
 Goldstone, G. A., *One-Act Plays*  
 Halline, A. G., *American Plays*  
 Hughes, Glenn, *Short Plays for Modern Players*  
 Isaacs, E. J. R., *Plays of American Life and Fantasy*  
 Johnson, Theodore, *Miniature Plays for Stage and Study; Plays in Miniature* (2 vols.); *Ten Fantasies for Stage and Study*  
 Knickerbocker, E. V., *Short Plays; Twelve Plays; Plays for Classroom Interpretation*  
 Leonard, S. A., *Atlantic Book of One-Act Plays*  
 Mayorga, Margaret, *Representative One-Act Plays by American Authors; The Best One-Act Plays of 1937* (also of 1938 and of 1939)  
 Moses, Montrose, *Representative American Dramas; Representative Plays by American Dramatists* (3 vols.)  
 Pence, R. W., *Dramas by Present-Day Writers*  
 Phillips, Le Roy, and Johnson, Theodore, *Types of Modern Dramatic Composition*  
 Quinn, A. H., *Contemporary American Plays; Representative American Plays*  
 Shay, Frank, *Treasury of Plays for Men; Treasury of Plays for Women; Twenty Contemporary One-Act Plays; Twenty-Five Short Plays*  
 Shay, Frank, and Loving, P., *Fifty Contemporary One-Act Plays; Fifty More Contemporary One-Act Plays*  
 Snook, L. O., *The First Yearbook of Short Plays* (also *Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth yearbooks*)  
 Thomas, C. S., *Atlantic Book of Junior Plays*  
 Tucker, S. M., *Modern American and British Plays; Twelve One-Act Plays for Study and Production*  
 Webber, J. P., and Webster, H. H., *Short Plays for Junior and Senior High Schools; Short Plays for Young People; One-Act Plays for Secondary Schools*

## *A Backward Glance*

NOW YOU have made the grand circle tour of American literature! You have met the great personalities; you have become acquainted with the high points of literary interest. A wide variety of the best thought and experience of your fellow Americans has been spread before you. If you have been alert, you have gradually increased the pleasure you get from reading, and you have also broadened and deepened your understanding of people and of life. In the rest of this book you will find a continuous narrative of the development of what we call the American Spirit, illuminated with more selections chosen to enrich your understanding of how Americans have lived and why they are the sort of people they are. But now, while your earlier reading is fresh in your mind, pause to take a backward glance over your opportunities for developing greater insight, for blending bits of knowledge into the rounded understanding that is the beginning of wisdom.

Here are grouped lists of selections that contribute to some special kind of understanding. Some readings you may remember so clearly that you need only think them over for a moment in order to realize how they fit in with the rest of the group. Some may have interested you more from another angle, so that you will need to skim over them rapidly a second time in order to appreciate fully their contribution to the understanding stressed in the group. You can probably think of other books, stories, poems, or plays you have read that played their part in widening your horizons or deepening your sympathies. Try to fit them into these groups along with the recent readings in this volume.

### I. WIDENING YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN NATURE

Nothing in life is more important than people, and no quality will influence your own happiness and success more than learning to understand and get along with your fellow human beings. In these selections you have had an opportunity to know well many odd or interesting characters. Observe the traits of each individual. Are they

interesting because they are typical of many people, or because they are unusual? How do personal traits affect happenings? Notice how the author, in each case, reveals the character's nature to you. From the writer's method you can glean hints for developing your own powers of observation and becoming a quicker and keener judge of character.

#### READINGS

*Short Stories:* Henry the Great (p. 8), The Frill (179), Midwestern Primitive (190), Footfalls (159)

*Essays:* Father and His Hard-Rocking Ship (261), Mary White (299), Review of *Benjamin Franklin* (360)

*Biography:* Lee in Defeat (398)

*Poems:* Abraham Davenport (486), The Limitations of Youth (597), Lincoln, The Man of the People (607), Miniver Cheevy (610), Bewick Finzer (611), The Death of the Hired Man (626), George Gray (635), Lucinda Matlock (635), Mary Lou Wingate (680)

### 2. UNDERSTANDING ANOTHER PERSON'S POINT OF VIEW ON LIFE

No two people ever agree on very many subjects, and all too many never even understand the other fellow's point of view. Yet such understanding is invaluable for your own growth and for pleasant fellowship. In these selections be sure first of all that you understand exactly what the other person's point of view is. Is it stated clearly, or is it only implied for you to figure out? Does the writer claim it for his own, or attribute it to one of his characters? Is it new to you? Do you sympathize with the point of view or disagree with it? Be sure you can explain and defend your reaction.

#### READINGS

*Short Stories:* The Minister's Black Veil (72), Ring around a Rosy (140), Split Cherry Tree (225)

*Essays:* On Conversation (294), Gifts (276), Selections from other Emerson Essays (280)

*Biography:* Barnum's American Museum (372)

*Poems:* Thanatopsis (467), Each and All (477), The Arsenal at Springfield (494), The Chambered Nautilus (514), Song of Myself (554), The Carol of Death (562), Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun (563), I'm Nobody (569), Some Keep the Sabbath (571), I Never Saw a Moor (571), The Fool's Prayer (587), Mending Wall (624), Leaves (667), Dirge with-

out Music (674), Prayer (679), It Is a Strange Thing — to Be an American (692)

### 3. SHARING THE EXCITEMENT OF GREAT STRUGGLES

Life is most exciting when man is putting forth all his effort in a struggle against a powerful opponent — a human enemy, the forces of the natural world, an overwhelming emotion that he wishes to escape, a devastating disease. How completely can you enter into these varied adventures that the cover of a book can open up for you? Do you feel intensely the force of the struggle, the power of the opponent? What fear of failure, what improved chances of success keep up the suspense? Are you mature enough to respond to the thrill of a struggle in which the stake is not one man's life but the welfare and happiness of many people?

#### READINGS

*Short Stories:* The Most Dangerous Game (26), A Struggle for Life (93), To Build a Fire (124), Flight (207)

*Essays:* Walter Reed (328), "If We Take Off at Night . . ." (349)

*Biography:* Sam Houston at San Jacinto (384)

*Drama:* Textiles (807)

*Poems:* Skipper Ireson's Ride (483), Columbus (590), Westward Ho! (591), The Mountain Whippoorwill (683)

### 4. ESTIMATING THE QUALITIES THAT MAKE FOR SUCCESS OR FAILURE

We are all eager to learn just how to succeed in life. Have you ever thought that we can learn from the failures no less than from the successes? In this group of readings the endeavors range from desperate attempts to escape death to simple attempts to impress other people. Different types of struggle call for different qualities to meet them. Discover first what is the goal sought, and then examine the qualities in the characters that result in failure or success. Was the endeavor doomed to failure from the start? Then how should the character have avoided the struggle? Was there a chance of success which was missed through carelessness or some other failing? Would the qualities that won success in one instance have succeeded in some of the others?

## READINGS

*Short Stories:* The Most Dangerous Game (26), To Build a Fire (124),  
Midwestern Primitive (190)

*Essays:* Walter Reed (328), "If We Take Off at Night . . ." (349)

*Biography:* I Become a Reporter (419), The Hall of Man (429)

*Poems:* Columbus (590), Opportunity (589), Miniver Cheevy (610),  
Richard Cory (611), Bewick Finzer (611), John Horace Burleson (634),  
Mrs. George Reece (635), George Gray (635), Lucinda Matlock (635)

5. ENTERING INTO LIVES WITH BACK-  
GROUNDS DIFFERENT FROM YOUR OWN

Where a man lives, in what times, and by what sort of work, can have a tremendous influence on his life. Here are lives with widely varying backgrounds. What have you learned about other ways of living? What have you gained in understanding the problems of other men? How have external circumstances influenced these lives? Would you like to exchange places with any of the people you meet in these selections? Why? Will your increased knowledge of their surroundings result in greater sympathy with their struggles?

## READINGS

*Short Stories:* The Outcasts of Poker Flat (103), To Build a Fire (124),  
The Frill (179), Split Cherry Tree (225)

*Essay:* The Heraldry of the Range (313)

*Biography:* School Life (411), The Hall of Man (429), Country Practice (439)

*Drama:* Where the Cross Is Made (729)

*Poems:* The Courtin' (517), Mannahatta (553), When the Frost Is on the Punkin (593), Westward Ho! (591), The Man with the Hoe (604), The Death of the Hired Man (626), Chicago (640), The Mountain Whip-poorwill (683)

6. INCREASING YOUR PLEASURE  
IN SIMPLE THINGS

Anyone can have a fine time in the midst of excitement and success. But everyday living is made up of little things and simple happenings. Some writers have tales of high adventure and daring to relate, but many others charm us with their ability to find a great deal of in-

terest in everyday living. This group of readings features the keener observation, the alert interest in simple things, that we must all develop to enjoy life all the time. What makes each selection interesting? Does the writer have remarkable powers of observation? Does he find in simple things a significance that most people miss? Does he have a personal charm which lends new interest to anything on which he may choose to comment? What simple things in your own life has he led you to observe with new insight?

## READINGS

*Short Stories:* *Midwestern Primitive* (190), *Split Cherry Tree* (225). *Sixteen* (238)

*Essays:* *Dozing* (255), *Brute Neighbors* (286)

*Biography:* *Boyhood* (403)

*Drama:* *Our Town* (748)

*Poems:* *The Rhodora* (475), *I Hear America Singing* (553), *Miracles* (567), *Aspects of the Pines* (578), *The Pasture* (621), *Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening* (623), *Grass* (641), *A Fence* (642), *Prayers of Steel* (644), *The Coin* (666), *Barter* (668), *The Spring and the Fall* (674), *To a Telegraph Pole* (678), *Long Feud* (678)

7. ENJOYING THE FULL SIGNIFICANCE  
OF FANTASY

When a writer departs from reality and deliberately fills his writing with happenings contrary to the laws of nature, he always has a purpose for doing so. Occasionally he may intend simply to entertain you with his extravagances, but more often he uses the unreal to drive home a truth about real life. Even the humorous fantasy may have a sound grain of truth at its core. Locate the fantastic elements in these selections, and then figure out the author's reason for using fantasy. What idea does he put over with fantastic happenings that he could not present as effectively by realistic means?

## READINGS

*Short Stories:* *The Devil and Tom Walker* (60), *The Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf* (114)

*Drama:* *Where the Cross Is Made* (729), *Our Town* (748)

*Poems:* *The Vision of Sir Launfal* (524), *Ulalume* (544), *Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight* (650), *General William Booth Enters into Heaven* (654), *The Santa Fe Trail* (656), *Escape* (669)



## 8. SHARPENING YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR

A sense of humor may be largely a natural gift, but the enjoyment of humor can be tripled and quadrupled by exercise. Particularly rich returns can be gained from noticing varied types of humor. Most of us respond to the purely ridiculous mixing of incongruous elements, but there are many other shades ranging from whimsy to satire. Here are some selections that are all for fun, some in which your laughter is directed against faults or weaknesses, and others in which humorous touches are used to lighten a serious bit of writing. If the humorous method is used to put over a serious point, be sure you get the point. If the humor is incidental, find the touches and phrases. You may pick up a new trick to enliven your own conversation or writing. Pay particular attention to bits that your fellow students enjoy more than you do, for there you have a hint for sharpening your own sense of humor. Distinguish between humor, which is an element in a situation, and wit, which is a matter of clever wording.

## READINGS

*Short Stories*: Henry the Great (8), The Devil and Tom Walker (60), The Whirligig of Life (118), Ring around a Rosy (140)

*Essays*: Dozing (255), Father and His Hard-Rocking Ship (261), How to Tell a Major Poet from a Minor Poet (344)

*Biography*: Barnum's American Museum (372), Boyhood (403)

*Poems*: My Aunt (508), The Boys (511), The Height of the Ridiculous (513), The Courtin' (517), A Fable for Critics (519), The Limitations of Youth (597), Nonsense Rhyme (670), The Mountain Whippoorwill (683), Plain Language from Truthful James (695), Candor (697), The Re-echo Club (699), How the Feud Started (701), freddy the rat perishes (703), Those Two Boys (705), One Perfect Rose (706), Folk Tune (707), Unanswered by Request (707)

9. SHARING GOOD TALK ABOUT BOOKS  
AND WRITERS

If you are like most people, you get a lot more out of reading than you can express effectively. Look back over these selections, in which writers talk about books and magazines and other writers. What words and phrases do you find that are particularly expressive? Do any of them express an idea or opinion that you have had difficulty in putting into words? What new insight do you get into books and

their makers from following these expert comments? From what different points of view are books and their materials discussed?

### READINGS

*Essays*: How to Tell a Major Poet from a Minor Poet (344), Magazines Are Human (354), Review of *Drums along the Mohawk* (358), Review of *Benjamin Franklin* (360), Review of *My America* (362)

*Biography*: Boyhood (403), School Life (411)

*Poems*: Proem (480), A Fable for Critics (519), The Stirrup Cup (585), John Horace Burleson (634), Pretty Words (672) The Re-echo Club (699)

### 10. ENJOYING VIVID IMAGERY IN DESCRIPTION

Ordinarily we think of imagery as belonging to poetry. Yet that same knack of catching a sensory impression in fresh and stimulating words is a great asset in other types of writing. Here are not only poems, but short stories, essays, and a play in which vivid description plays an important, if not major, part. Before you look back over each selection, see if you remember the images presented in it, and then take your quick review to see if you have missed any. Do you notice any special difference in the wording in the prose and in the poetry? Select one of the best prose passages and write it out as if it were free verse.

### READINGS

*Short Stories*: Flight (207), Sixteen (238)

*Essays*: The Voyage (269), Almost Island (304), The Century (323), "If We Take Off at Night . . ." (349)

*Drama*: Our Town (748)

*Poems*: To a Waterfowl (469), The Bells (537), Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun (563), An Altered Look about the Hills (570), The Mockingbird (577), Song of the Chattahoochee (581), A Vagabond Song (599), Green Fire (599), Patterns (616), Birches (622), Night Stuff (644), Sea Lullaby (670), Velvet Shoes (671), Autumn Daybreak (675), The Purse Seine (689), Nocturne (691)

### 11. EXPLORING THE FIELD THAT POETRY HAS ALL TO ITSELF

You have probably realized that poetry is not just a fancy way of expressing what could be said as well and more easily in prose. But

just what is it that only poetry can express to best effect? In the poems listed below you will find some that catch perfectly one brief mood; some that present a powerful emotion too intense to be long sustained; some that hint at a story which gives you greater pleasure by unfolding in your own mind than you could get from a full narrative; some that present a noble thought which would benefit nothing from expansion into full essay discussion; some that delight you by their sheer musical beauty, as a painting delights you with color and line. Discover for yourself what each poem expresses that no other form could present equally well.

#### READINGS

The Eternal Goodness (488), Hymn to the Night (493), The Tide Rises, the Tide Falls (503), The Chambered Nautilus (514), Annabel Lee (547), To Helen (537), A Noiseless Patient Spider (566), When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer (566), I Never Saw a Moor (571), The Soul Selects Her Own Society (572), We Never Know How High (573), Ode (576), Evening Song (584), The Sea Gypsy (601), Richard Cory (611), The People, Yes (644), The Lamp (666), Night Song at Amalfi (666), Lament (673), Joy (688)



# THE GROWTH OF THE AMERICAN SPIRIT

## *Chapter I*

### A FEW WORDS ABOUT ADVENTURES

#### *I. What Are Adventures in Literature?*

LITERATURE is life. It is made from life, but it is something more than life. When an author selects the parts of life which seem to him to be most interesting and important he is passing judgment on the lives of people, and he is telling us what actions lead to happiness or success. The act of writing literature is, therefore, a sort of court, and literature itself is a judgment, or *criticism*, of life by the keenest minds in the world. American literature gives us Mark Twain's selection of the funniest events of his boyhood, Whitman's picture of war disrupting all normal life, and Emerson's personal advice on living happily and valiantly. In the first two-thirds of this book you have adventured into the minds of these great men and of many more of our most significant writers.

But when we speak of adventures in American literature, we are referring not only to thrilling stories, distinctive poetry, and thoughtful comments written by Americans; we are also referring to the story of the greatest American adventure — the settling of a continent and

the development of a nation. Those who have played an intimate part in the stirring events of our history have left us countless records through which we may see and feel the growth of the American spirit. The last third of the book will show you this growth, stage by stage. You will relive the experiences of many men and women who courageously met change and opportunity as they came, and built up — often with pain and privation — the great structure of our national strength and unity.

What a story it is! Look backward over the centuries. Five hundred years ago, no living European had seen America, and scarcely a European suspected that there might be a new land west of the Western Ocean. Four hundred years ago, a few voyages had pushed back the darkness from these mysterious waters, and a thin fringe of Spanish settlement had begun to appear on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, from which explorers struck out in search of the Fountain of Youth and the fabulous gold hoards of the native princes. There was still no such thing as English-speaking America. A hundred years later, a few groups of Englishmen were erecting log houses on the shores of Massachusetts and Virginia, while they kept a weather eye open for Indians. Another century, and thriving British colonies were strung down the length of the Atlantic coast. Still another century, and there was no trace of British authority anywhere from Maine to Florida. A new nation was experimenting awkwardly with an independence it scarcely knew how to use, and over a dozen mountain passes it was pouring a tide of settlers into the Mississippi Valley. Now, at the end of another hundred years, we see the result of a most amazing program of mechanization, which has tied every corner of the country to every other corner with ribbons of steel, concrete, and copper, which has brought the Metropolitan Opera House within one-fifth second of California, and which has made it possible to reproduce the conveniences and customs of the largest cities in the remotest village or country home in America. All this story is told by American literature.

But the story of the American adventure is more than this. The earliest settlers came here because they thought they could live here more happily — because of religious freedom or political freedom or economic opportunity. They found a peculiar set of problems to be met. At first, they had to bring civilization to a wilderness. They had to erect their own government, choose their own religious system, make their own laws. And ever since the first white settler came to the Atlantic shores there have been American problems to be solved

by every American who wanted to reach that wise adjustment of man to environment and experience which results in happiness. Our literature is the story of three hundred years of effort to live happily in America.

Our writers lived the great adventure. You, too, can participate in it through your reading. The understanding of their experiences will help you to meet and solve the problems of adventurous living which your own generation will encounter.

## 2. *The Background of the Adventure*

The adventure of American literature has so far not been a very long one. Ours is one of the few important national literatures in the world which are younger than printing. The first English book written in America, Captain John Smith's *True Relation*, was not in print until 1608, and many critics are inclined to believe that there was no truly *American* literature until the nineteenth century, when Bryant, Irving, Cooper, and Poe began to write. The story of the literature, therefore, need not cover more than three hundred years; the most important part covers less than one hundred and fifty. This is very short for national literatures. English literature, for example, began far back in the dim days when ballads were handed down from minstrel to minstrel by word of mouth; and one of England's greatest writers, Geoffrey Chaucer, was born six centuries ago.

Of course, American literature is only one of the branches of the great body of literature written in the English language. We, as well as the British, can claim in our literary ancestral tree this same Chaucer, and likewise Shakespeare, Milton, and the other great writers who flourished before America had any identity of its own. But the common understanding of the term "American literature" is the body of writing produced on this side of the ocean, and even more specifically in the United States. The adjective *American* may widely apply to all countries of the Western Hemisphere; but as we have no other adjective to designate those things which are limited to the United States, we have come to understand it and use it most commonly in its national sense. *American* is so used throughout this volume.

The background of American literature is, however, much older than the actual writing. Just as we have ceased to think that literature is something apart from life, so have we learned that literature depends to a great extent upon certain of the settings of life. In order

to understand a literature completely we must know something about the geography of the country, about the nature of the people and their history. These circumstances set the stage for literature even before pen is touched to paper. Let us see how some of them have influenced American literature.

**The land.** Suppose that you had arrived at the mouth of the James River with Captain Smith in 1607, and that you had borne with you a commission signed by His Majesty King James of England, ordering you to bring back a complete report of the geography of the new country. And suppose that you had been furnished with muskets to save you from the Indians, winged slippers to scale the mountains, and seven-league boots to hurry across the plains — what sort of a report would you have brought?

You would have told the King that the eastern edge of the continent is a level tidewater plain, well adapted to rich crops. At an average distance of about one hundred miles from the sea the land suddenly rises and becomes rockier, forming the section which we call the Piedmont Plateau. The meeting of the Piedmont and the Tidewater is the "fall line," where the streams plunge from the rocks of the higher plateau into the soft plain beneath. Not a single river leading westward from the Atlantic is navigable beyond this fall line — and you would say this with regret, because it means that His Majesty's colonists will have to transport their goods by horse and by hand if they move very far from the coast, and it means that British America for many years will consist only of that little strip of coast line.

Beyond the Piedmont rise the Appalachian Mountains. Their western slopes are abrupt, and few passes lead to the interior. It will be a long time before civilization crosses these ranges. Once beyond the mountains, however, the settlers will find a wonderfully rich river valley, bordered on the north by a series of great lakes and on the south by the Gulf of Mexico. You would have told the King that this great river is like the arteries of the continent, that its valley is a veritable garden spot for the hunter and farmer, and that the streams provide easy traveling and cheap shipping — truly a paradise for commerce and colonization.

The river valley gradually becomes higher and more arid as you travel westward, and these great plains slowly climb and climb until, when they reach the height of about one mile above sea level, they are terminated by a range of mountains much higher and more rugged than the Appalachians. These mountains, also, offer few gateways to the country farther west, but beyond them lies a wonderfully dif-

ferent country — deserts and gardens, mountains and valleys, forests of gigantic trees and great rivers full of fish.

This is the report you would have brought back to the King, and then, if you were gifted with prophetic insight, you might have said some penetrating things about the future development of America.

In the first place, American history and the history of American literature for several centuries will be the history of that narrow strip of the Atlantic coast. What a difference in the development of America one large river leading several hundred miles west from the Atlantic would have made! The Hudson, of course, is navigable, but it leads north. At the mouth of the Hudson, however, a little Dutch settlement is destined to become a financial capital. It has a natural harbor. It is the outlet for the fur trade of the interior. It lies halfway between the rich industries of New England and the rich plantations of the South. Yes, New York rather than Boston will be America's front door. New England, with its rugged country and abundant water power, is adapted much less to farming than to manufacturing. Even if the same kind of people settle in New England and the South, the geography will make them develop differently. The New Englanders will naturally cluster in cities, where industries and newspapers, schools, and public libraries thrive. The Southerners will naturally develop a country of broad plantations, a leisurely aristocratic civilization instead of one with the hurried tempo of New England life, a country of fine private libraries instead of public ones. Small wonder if these two sections should develop quite different literatures.

What would happen when immigration finally overflowed the mountains? Civilization, agriculture, commerce, and schools would spread like wildfire across the plains, but, once there, they would find themselves cut off from the East. New England was almost nearer Europe than the Middle West. The early settler in Ohio could ship his potatoes to New Orleans at one-eighth of the cost of shipping them to Philadelphia by land. The Middle West, therefore, would tend to be self-sufficient and to develop differently from New England. It would produce a Mark Twain, while New England would produce a Longfellow.

We might carry this story on; but these examples are probably sufficient to show how intimately geography is related to literature, and how long the stage was set before there was such a thing as New England, or Southern, or Middle Western literature.

**The people.** America is such a young country that it has not



had time to develop an American people, in the same sense that there is a German, a French, and an English people. America is the great country of immigration. When Columbus came here, there was not a single man of European stock anywhere on the continent of North America. Now there are more than a hundred million of them. From all parts of Europe and from other continents they have come, bringing with them their ideas and their individual contributions to American civilization. American culture and literature are the products of these various nationalities and their gifts to America.

It has been said again and again that the English brought the ax and the Germans the rifle; and this is true, but it tells only part of the story. The English brought their schools and their laws, which did much more than their axes. The Germans did bring the rifle, but their greatest contribution to early America was their knowledge of scientific farming. Nor were these nationalities the only ones that contributed. The French explored the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley and sent thousands of settlers into New England and the South. The Scotch-Irish explored and held the early frontier. The Dutch settled New York; the Scandinavians, a large part of the northern Mississippi; the Spaniards, the extreme South and Southwest. The Irish, the Italians, the Jews, the Negroes, the Japanese, and many other groups came and contributed to the great American melting pot.

There will be time enough in later chapters to talk about their most valuable gifts to America — their ideas. America, because it has been European in origin, has always had an attentive ear to Europe. When a wave of a certain kind of thinking has spread over Europe it has generally crossed the ocean to America. We shall see later that America had an "Age of Reason" shortly after Europe had one, and a "Romantic Movement" soon after Europe's Romantic Movement.

Whenever in the pages of this book you come across such different names as Lowell (English), Thoreau (French), O'Neill (Irish), Dreiser (German), Rølvaag (Norwegian), MacLeish (Scotch), you will be reminded of the many strains that have gone into the making of America and American literature, and you will better understand how there can be so much difference among American books written at about the same time.

**The frontier.** The geography, the people, the history — these are the most important stage settings of literature. In all American history the longest and most important movement is the progress of the frontier. This frontier has probably done more than anything else to make American civilization different from European civilization.

Europe was settled, European families had lived on the same ground for centuries, before the first immigrants crossed the Alleghenies. There, everything was fixed — laws, custom, ownership. In America, on the other hand, everything was new. The land was free and unsettled. Nothing was fixed. Man had to make his own laws, forge his own destiny, build his own home on a location of his own choosing. In other words, when Europeans were transplanted from a static life into an extremely volatile life, they became different people from their relatives left across the ocean. Imagine yourself in the place of Robinson Crusoe or one of the Swiss Family Robinson, and you will come close to understanding how an immigrant from Europe was affected by the boundless freedom and opportunity of the open frontier.

Frontier life had to be democratic; every man was as good as his neighbor, and the only aristocrats were the pistol aristocracy. Frontier life developed shrewdness, because a man had to plan well and drive hard bargains to get ahead. It developed practical ability equal to any emergency; if a covered wagon broke down in the middle of Nebraska, the owner couldn't send back to a mail-order house for a new part. It developed humor, because the frontier was no place for tragedy or brooding; there was too much to do. It developed an exuberant love of freedom; in fact, if we were to go through a complete catalogue of characteristically American traits, we should be able to trace a very large proportion of them to the long influence of an active frontier in America. And these characteristics, of course, are the things that make an American literature.

The frontier has passed now. The available land has been settled — but not long ago. Some of the pioneers are still living among us, telling tales of prairie schooners, battles with Indians, and dashes for free homesteads or promising claims. But we may be sure that long after the last frontiersman has gone the influence of the frontier will continue to permeate American literature.

### 3. *Our Timetable*

When you board the Twentieth Century Limited in New York, you carry in your hands a little folder that tells you when the train will get to Albany, when to Schenectady, when to Buffalo, and so all the way to Chicago. Now we are going to travel rapidly through a good many centuries in the next few chapters, and we need a timetable to plan our trip. This is our schedule:

## CHAPTER

- II. Colonial Life and Literature, 1607-1775
- III. A New Nation, 1775-1800
- IV. American Literary Independence and Romanticism, 1800-1870
- V. The Advancing Frontier, 1800-1860
- VI. The Test of the Union, 1860-1865
- VII. Growth and Change, 1860-1914
- VIII. The Rise of Realism, 1870-1914
- IX. World War and Modern Problems, 1914 to the Present
- X. Contemporary American Literature, 1914 to the Present

As you study this timetable, remember a highly important point. *The dates for beginning and ending of historical and literary ages are only approximate.* In other words, no great movements begin all at once. They rise slowly like the tide, and fall again slowly. Life flows like a smooth stream; it isn't a series of jerks. Literature follows life. Of course, we can set an exact date, 1607, for the beginning of colonial life because that was when the first permanent settlement was made on our shores. The Revolution actually began to boil in 1775 but had been brewing years before, and the date 1800 at the close of Chapter III is merely a convenient round number between the days of forming a new nation and the period of rapid expansion. This natural growth is rudely interrupted by the test of the War between the States. Though the brief period represented by the dates marks the time of open warfare, the chapter called "The Test of the Union" goes back into the early causes of the struggle and forward to the period of reconstruction after the war. The date 1914, which marks the beginning or ending of several chapters, is the opening of the World War, a struggle so significant in its consequences that it serves as the natural milestone to mark the beginning of our modern age.

Chapters IV, VIII, and X trace the history of the changes in our literature running parallel to events of national development. These chapters have their own sequence of dates: 1800, 1870, 1914. The middle date serves as a general guide to show the decade when the romantic spirit began to give way to the realistic spirit, and the World War introduces an age predominantly realistic.

Keep the table handy; it will tell you where we are going and when. But remember that its dates aren't quite so accurate as a railroad schedule, nor so invariable as your birthday. They are only approximate.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. From section 1 of this chapter make a time chart for yourself by centuries, starting with five hundred years ago. For each century record the progress of the white man's occupation of this country.
2. Describe the physical conditions of our land. How did these affect the early settlements? the later development of the country? the development of American literature?
3. What different types of people and nationalities combined to form our nation? Look through the names of authors listed in the table of contents and see how many names come from nationalities other than English.
4. What part has the frontier played in American life? in our literature?

*For Ambitious Students*

5. An interesting project would be a series of five small maps of the United States — one for each century, beginning with the sixteenth. Represent the portions the white man had settled at that time by white and the remainder by black. Gray could be used for those portions just beginning to be settled. Of what advantage are timetables, charts, and maps in the study of literature?
6. A topographical map of the United States showing the conditions described in this chapter would make an interesting project.



## *Chapter II*

### COLONIAL LIFE AND LITERATURE

(1607-1775)

COLONIAL America was the scene of tremendous activity with the ax and the hammer and the plow and the rifle, but not with the pen. By the time the early colonists had built homes for shelter from the weather, had cleared fields and planted crops to guard against hunger, and had erected forts for protection from hostile attack, they had more inclination for rest than for writing. The wonder is not that we have little colonial literature, but that we have as much as we have. Even so, some of these hardy spirits set down accounts of the discovery of the land and the founding of the early settlements, the Puritans wrote diligently to further education and religion, and other men and women kept diaries and journals that preserve a picture of daily life in those early times. Before the Revolution, Benjamin Franklin, busy statesman and scientist though he was, had also built a lasting reputation as a writer.

Life along the Atlantic seaboard in the early days presented many contrasts, because many different types of people were among the colonists and because differences in the land where they settled developed further differences in their way of living. Most of the settlers were English; but they came from an England divided within itself into two groups, who differed so sharply on matters of religion and politics that a revolution occurred, a king was beheaded, and for eleven

years (1649-60) the country was ruled by a kingless government of citizens. The revolutionists, who wanted so strongly to purify religion and government that they dethroned the King, were known as Puritans. The men who favored a more lenient religion, who wanted to uphold the traditional State Church against a group of independent thinkers, and who supported the King during the revolution were known as Cavaliers. During the troubled years in England many members of both groups came to the new land across the Atlantic. There was an interesting circumstance about the migration of these people to the New World — the Puritans came, almost without exception, to New England; the Cavaliers to Virginia.

Many of the Cavaliers had been the landed gentry of England. In Virginia they found the broad acres of the fertile Tidewater Plain, and they proceeded to settle large plantations. They established few schools, and most of these were private ones; the sons of the rich planters were taught by tutors, and the sons of the poor settlers were usually not taught at all. In Virginia's comfortable climate these planters lived the leisurely life of gentlemen. They did not write much literature. Their main interest was politics, and the fruit of this interest appeared when the South contributed a long list of leaders to the American Revolution and several of the early Presidents.

New England developed very differently. New England is hilly, and its fields are full of rocks ("I love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and templed hills"); it does not encourage the establishment of large plantations. The Puritans had to cluster together in towns, instead of living far apart in the country as the Cavaliers did. This community life was good for literature. Schools were established at once, and every boy was compelled to attend. The first American university, Harvard, was established in 1636, only six years after the foundation of Massachusetts Bay Colony. The first American printing press was set up in Cambridge three years later. Off this press rolled hundreds of books, pamphlets, and sermons. And while the publications were censored strictly and the teaching in the schools was controlled strictly, intellectual life, nevertheless, was at white heat in New England during the Puritan century.

In between the Northern settlements of the Puritans and the Southern settlements of the Cavaliers, a group of Dutch pioneers established a colony in what is now New York. In the fertile Hudson Valley large farms were developed under the old patroon system, differing from the plantation system of the South but combining many farms with their tenants into something like a feudal system of landholding.

Their lucky location at the finest harbor on the coast stimulated early ventures in shipping and trading. Very little writing of their own was left by these Dutch settlers, but Washington Irving preserved their quaint charm and sturdy virtues in his delightful *Knickerbocker's History of New York*.

### I. *First Records*

The first writings in American literature were hardly works of art, but no masterpiece ever had a more eager audience waiting for it. The people of Europe were consumed with curiosity about the new land. Put yourself in their place. Suppose that Admiral Byrd, in one of his flights over Antarctica, had happened upon a new continent, bigger than all America, populated by a strange race who spoke an unintelligible dialect, blessed with every variation of climate and scenery, rich with mineral and agricultural wealth, and that all this richness and property were free to anyone who would take them from a simple people who knew nothing of modern methods of warfare. What would happen? The new continent would be the most discussed subject in the world. Admiral Byrd would be pressed to tell everything he knew about the new land. People would rush southward to find out more about it and to settle there. Everything they wrote back home about their experiences and their impressions would be eagerly read. And this is just what happened when Europe came to America.

**Columbus' diary.** Columbus himself kept a full journal of his voyages, and in that book and in his letters you can read the whole story of that mad, desperate trip — how when only a few days out the voyagers began already to be puzzled by the variation of the compass away from the North Star; how they saw a large piece of mast, a mute reminder of the fate of other adventurers in the Western Ocean; how sometimes the sea was "as calm as the river at Seville" and at other times they sailed through seas of weeds or drenching storms; how the land they expected to see always proved to be clouds — until, finally, more than a month from land, they began to see ducks on the water and overhead, and then on October 11 they saw "a green Rush & a pole" and "at night a light," and on the following day raised the shout of "Land!" Joaquin Miller has written a poetic version of this story in his "Columbus" (see page 590).

**William Strachey's shipwreck.** Another early voyager who had troubled sailing was William Strachey, whose party, bound for Jamestown in 1609, was shipwrecked and cast upon one of the Bermuda Is-

lands. His account of this harrowing experience is credited with having inspired Shakespeare's description of the storm and shipwreck at the beginning of *The Tempest*. Strachey's narrative was in circulation in London three years before Shakespeare's play was presented, and the play uses whole phrases from Strachey's vivid description. Strachey makes us see and feel with him

the cloudes gathering thicke upon us, and the windes singing, and whistling most unusual . . . a dreadfull storme and hideous began to blow from out the North-east, which swelling, and roaring as it were by fits, some houres with more violence than others, at length did beat all light from heaven; which like an hell of darkness turned black upon us. . . . The Sea swelled above the Clouds, and gave battell unto Heaven. . . . Once, so huge a Sea broke upon the poepe and quarter upon us, as it covered our Shippe from stearne to stemme, like a garment or a vast cloude. . . . [We went] from Tuesday till Friday morning day and night, without either sleepe or foode.

The survivors of this storm constructed two little vessels in Bermuda, and finally reached Virginia a year later.

Two first settlers. Leaders of the first hands to make permanent settlements in both Virginia and New England recorded their adventures for later Americans to read. Captain John Smith, who came over with the first group to establish a colony at Jamestown, in 1607, and soon rose to a position of authority, wrote down his account in *A True Relation* (1608), the first book written in the English language in America and traditionally the first piece of American literature. With the first group of Pilgrims on the *Mayflower* was William Bradford, later thirty times governor of Plymouth Plantation. His history *Of Plimouth Plantation* was written some years later but included an account of the voyage and the first landing of his party, in 1620.

## THE ORIGINAL POCAHONTAS STORY

by CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH (1580-1631)

In *The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles*, a revised and enlarged edition of *A True Relation*, Captain John Smith recounted many of the adventures and hardships that beset the first little colony in Tidewater Virginia. Long an adventurer and soldier of fortune, Smith seasoned his narrative with all the romance and excitement he found in the Virginia expedition. His most famous adventure



was his narrow escape from death at the hands of the Indians when the princess Pocahontas intervened to save his life. Historians suspect the doughty captain of drawing heavily on his imagination for this romantic episode, which was not included in the earlier *True Relation*. But, true or not, the story has become more real than truth to later Americans and is at least a firmly established legend. Here we have Smith's own original account of the event. He writes of himself in the third person. Captain John Smith is the "him" we find a prisoner of the savages.

AT LAST they brought him to *Meronomoco*, where was *Powhatan*, their Emperor. Here more than two hundred of those grim courtiers stood wondering at him, as he had been a monster, till *Powhatan* and his train had put themselves in their greatest braveries. Before a fire upon a seat like a bedstead, he sat covered with a great robe, made of *Rarowcun*<sup>1</sup> skins, and all the tails hanging by. On either hand did sit a young wench of 16 or 18 years, and along on each side the house, two rows of men, and behind them as many women, with all their heads and shoulders painted red: many of their heads bedecked with the white down of Birds; but every one with something, and a great chain of white beads about their necks.

At his entrance before the king, all the people gave a great shout. The Queen of *Appamatuck* was appointed to bring him water to wash his hands, and another brought him a bunch of feathers, instead of a Towel to dry them. Having feasted him after their best barbarous manner they could, a long consultation was held, but the conclusion was, two great stones were brought before *Powhatan*: then as many as could laid hands on him, dragged him to them, and thereon laid his head, and being ready with their clubs to beat out his brains, *Pocahontas*, the King's dearest daughter, when no entreaty could prevail, got his head in her arms, and laid her own upon his to save him from death: whereat the Emperor was contented he should live to make him hatchets, and her bells, beads, and copper; for they thought him as well of all occupations as themselves. For the King himself will make his own robes, shoes, bows, arrows, pots; plant, hunt, or do anything so well as the rest.

They say he bore a pleasant show,  
But sure his heart was sad,  
For who can pleasant be, and rest,  
That lives in fear and dread:  
And having life suspected, doth  
It still suspected lead.

<sup>1</sup> *Rarowcun*: raccoon.

Two days after, *Powhatan* having disguised himself in the fearfulest manner he could, caused Captain *Smith* to be brought forth to a great house in the woods, and there upon a mat by the fire to be left alone. Not long after from behind a mat that divided the house, was made the most doleful noise he ever heard; then *Powhatan* more like a devil than a man, with some two hundred more as black as himself, came unto him and told him now they were friends, and presently he should go to *James* town, to send him two great guns, and a grindstone, for which he would give him the Country of *Capahowosick*, and forever esteem him as his son *Nantaquoud*.

So to *James* town with 12 guides *Powhatan* sent him. That night they quartered in the woods, he still expecting (as he had done all this long time of his imprisonment) every hour to be put to one death or another, for all their feasting. But almighty God (by his divine providence) had mollified the hearts of these stern *Barbarians* with compassion. The next morning betimes they came to the Fort, where *Smith* having used the savages with what kindness he could, showed *Raw-hunt*, *Powhatan's* trusty servant, two demi-Culverings<sup>1</sup> and a millstone to carry *Powhatan*. They found them somewhat too heavy; but when they did see him discharge them, being loaded with stones, among the boughs of a great tree loaded with icicles, the ice and branches came so tumbling down, that the poor savages ran away half dead with fear. But at last we regained some conference with them, and gave them such toys, and sent to *Powhatan*, his women, and children, such presents as gave them in general full content.

## SCOUTING FOR A LANDING IN NEW ENGLAND

by WILLIAM BRADFORD (1590-1657)

No romancer was William Bradford, governor of Plymouth Plantation, but a sober recorder of fact who wished to tell his story "in plain stile; with singular regard unto simple truth in all things." Plainly and simply does he tell of the first party to go ashore from the *Mayflower* in search of a suitable landing place. The reader, remembering that this was the beginning of an important chapter in American life, must supply the excitement as he reads about the little party seeking a place to settle

<sup>1</sup> demi-Culverings: small cannon with a bore of about four and a half inches.

BEING thus arrived at Cape Cod the 11 of November, and necessity calling them to look out a place for habitation (as well as the master's & mariners' importunity), they having brought a large shallop<sup>1</sup> with them out of England, stowed in quarters in the ship, they now got her out & set their carpenters to work to trim her up; but being much bruised & shattered in the ship with foul weather, they saw she would be long in mending. Whereupon a few of them tendered themselves to go by land and discover those nearest places, whilst the shallop was in mending; and the rather because as they went into that harbor there seemed to be an opening some 2 or 3 leagues off, which the master judged to be a river. It was conceived there might be some danger in the attempt, yet seeing them resolute, they were permitted to go, being 16 of them well armed, under the conduct of Captain Standish,<sup>2</sup> having such instructions given them as was thought meet.

They set forth the 15 of November, and when they had marched about the space of a mile by the seaside, they espied 5 or 6 persons with a dog coming towards them, who were savages; but they fled from them, & ran up into the woods, and the English followed them, partly to see if they could speak with them, and partly to discover if there might not be more of them lying in ambush. But the Indians seeing themselves thus followed, they again forsook the woods, & ran away on the sands as hard as they could, so as they could not come near them, but followed them by the track of their feet sundry miles, and saw that they had come the same way. So, night coming on, they made their rendezvous & set out their sentinels, and rested in quiet the night, and the next morning followed their track till they had headed a great creek, & so left the sands, & turned another way into the woods. But they still followed them by guess, hoping to find their dwelling; but they soon lost them & themselves, falling into such thickets as were ready to tear their clothes & armor in pieces, but were most distressed for want of drink. But at length they found water & refreshed themselves, being the first New-England water they drunk of, and was now in their great thirst as pleasant unto them as wine or beer had been in foretimes. Afterwards they directed their course to come to the other shore, for they knew it was a neck of land they were to cross over, and so at length got to the sea-side, and marched to this supposed river, & by the way found a pond of clear fresh water, and shortly after a good quantity of clear ground where the Indians had formerly set corn, and some of their graves. And pro-

<sup>1</sup> shallop: a small boat with one or two light sails. <sup>2</sup> Captain Standish: Miles Standish, later immortalized by Longfellow in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*.

ceeding further they saw new stubble where corn had been set the same year; also they found where lately a house had been, where some planks and a great kettle was remaining, and heaps of sand newly paddled with their hands, which they, digging up, found in them divers fair Indian baskets filled with corn, and some in ears, fair and good, of divers colors, which seemed to them a very goodly sight (having never seen any such before).

This was near the place of that supposed river they came to seek, unto which they went and found it to open itself into 2 arms with a high cliff of sand in the entrance, but more like to be creeks of salt water than any fresh, for aught they saw; and that there was good harboring for their shallop; leaving it further to be discovered by their shallop when she was ready. So their time limited them being expired, they returned to the ship, lest they should be in fear of their safety, and took with them part of the corn and buried up the rest, and so like the men from Escholl <sup>1</sup> carried with them of the fruits of the land, & showed their brethren; of which, & their return, they were marvelously glad, and their hearts encouraged.

After this, the shallop being got ready, they set out again for the better discovery of this place, & the master of the ship desired to go himself, so there went some 30 men, but found it to be no harbor for ships but only for boats. There was also found two of their houses covered with mats, & sundry of their implements in them, but the people were run away & could not be seen. Also there was found more of their corn, & of their beans of various colors. The corn & beans they brought away, purposing to give them full satisfaction when they should meet with any of them (as about 6 months afterward they did, to their great content). And here is to be noted a special providence of God, and a great mercy to this poor people, that here they got seed to plant them corn the next year, or else they might have starved, for they had none, nor any likelihood to get any till the season had been past (as the sequel did manifest). Neither is it likely they had had this, if the first voyage <sup>2</sup> had not been made, for the ground was now all covered with snow, & hard frozen. But the Lord is never wanting unto his in their greatest needs; let his holy name have all the praise.

<sup>1</sup> **men from Escholl:** scouts sent out by Moses to bring a report of the land of Canaan; they brought back grapes, pomegranates, and figs (Num. 12:23). <sup>2</sup> **first voyage:** first scouting trip ashore.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What definite bits of information about Indian life do you get from these two early accounts? What differences do you find between the Indians in Smith's account and those in Bradford's? Do you think the difference was more in the Indians or in the writers? Why?
2. Are you surprised to find that Captain Smith devotes so little space to the story of Pocahontas' intervention to save his life? How do you account for the popularity this story came to have?
3. What evidence of the hardships of the voyage in the *Mayflower* is given in the first paragraph of Bradford's narrative? What warning of further hardship can you find in the last sentences?
4. What do you think of the way the English appropriated the Indians' store of corn and beans? Do you know why these men had never seen corn before?

*For Ambitious Students*

5. Stanley Young's one-act play, *Ship Forever Sailing*, presents an incident of the *Mayflower* landing that helps us understand the significance of this event toward establishing certain American institutions. It is well adapted to class dramatization.

*2. The Puritan in New England*

We have seen that the community living in early New England favored the growth of literature more than did the scattered plantation life of the Southern colonies. But the Puritan found an added motive for writing in his religion, which had to be explained, defended, and propagated. It may be well to ask, now: What was this religion?

What is a Puritan? The faith of the Puritan was based on the teachings of Calvin, whose great doctrine was predestination. All but a very few men, said Calvin, are destined before birth to eternal damnation because of the sin of Adam and Eve. The few who are to be saved are known as "the elect"; and by close keeping of God's covenant, they may catch a glimpse of their happy fate. The burning question for each Puritan was whether he was among the elect. So he led a thoughtful life, looking much into his own conduct and faith for a glimpse of his destiny. He led a sternly upright life, as became one of God's chosen servants; for to sin was to give up hope

and admit he had no chance of escaping the fiery pit. But he did not lead a drab, unexciting life, as we are often told. If not allowed to play games on Sunday, he was all the time playing a much more exciting game — a game which has been called “a terrifically exciting adventure with Jehovah” — trying to find out whether he was destined to spend eternity in bliss or in torment. No sermon or prayer was too long, for any moment might bring the reassurance he sought. His religion was a drama with tremendous suspense, holding him absorbed and awed.

**Poetry among the Puritans.** The first book off the American press, *The Bay Psalm Book* (1640), illustrates one of the great uses the Puritans had for literature: to aid them in worship. The book was a collection of the Psalms put into metrical form to fit the few monotonous tunes to which they were sung in the meetinghouses.

Verse served the Puritan religion even in the schools, where the fathers found another practical use for literary forms. Perhaps the first thing a Puritan child read was the famous *New England Primer*, which taught the somber truths of Puritanism at the same time that it taught the alphabet.

The poet laureate of New England Puritanism was the Reverend Michael Wigglesworth, whose poem “The Day of Doom” was the “best seller” of the seventeenth century in America. The poem seems quaint to us now, with its jiggling verse and its horrible pictures, but nothing else tells us quite so clearly and vividly how real both Heaven and Hell seemed to the Puritan.

**Early Puritan histories.** Prose was much better fitted to the Puritan temperament than verse, and, indeed, the Puritans had more use for prose. They felt a serious responsibility, for one thing, to keep the records of their settlements, in order that the people in England and future generations could see what was being done. This they did, with no attempt at fine writing or self-praise. William Bradford, who wrote the account of the first landing of the Pilgrims, continued his narrative of Plymouth Plantation through the year 1646, and John Winthrop, first governor of the neighboring Massachusetts Bay Colony, wrote the history of that settlement. These books are interesting reading, and they are invaluable sources of information for later writers on the Puritan period. Hawthorne got much material for *The Scarlet Letter* from Winthrop's book.

**The theocracy.** The people who had the greatest use for prose, however, were the ministers. These men occupied a place in Puritan

New England far more prominent than the one they occupy today. The Puritans came across the sea to create the ideal kingdom. They were going to establish the Golden Age in America. It was to be, of course, the rule of God. They believed that God took an active part in human life but that He worked through representatives, and these representatives were the ministers. The preachers of the Puritan church were, therefore, the spokesmen for God on earth, and they had the right to speak God's will in politics as well as in religion. Today we have a working agreement whereby the ministers run religion and the political officials run the government; this is called the separation of Church and State. There was no such arrangement in New England. The minister was the most important man in the colony. The situation was, therefore, called a *theocracy*, which means a government by God through his priests on earth.

**The Mathers.** Not only did the ministers direct matters spiritual and temporal in early New England; they also wrote the literature. So great was contemporary admiration for three succeeding generations of the Mather family — Richard, Increase, and Cotton — that they still hold a place in American literature, even though no one but the student of those early days now reads what they wrote. And it is not the miraculous evidence of God's intervention in earthly affairs recorded in Increase Mather's *Illustrious Providences* (1684) nor the detailed account of New England ecclesiastical history in Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) that is read most often. It is the curious and awkward *Bay Psalm Book*, which Richard Mather helped to compile, doubly interesting as a relic of Puritan worship and as the first book printed in English in America.

**Dissenting voices.** Before the end of the Mathers' day the power of the theocracy was slipping. Even before 1700, dissenting voices were heard in New England. There was the famous incident involving Thomas Morton, for instance. Morton was a Cavalier who had, for some reason, strayed into New England and established between Plymouth and Boston a colony which he called Merrymount. His colony was dedicated to joy, and he erected a Maypole and invited Indian women to join in the dance around it. You may easily imagine what the sober Pilgrims thought of such goings-on. Miles Standish marched against the new colony, tore down the Maypole, and sent Morton back to England. Morton wrote a humorous account of the incident in his *New English Canaan*, and Bradford wrote a righteous and wrathful account of it in his history. The two accounts make an amusing contrast. Two centuries later Hawthorne wrote a story about

Merrymount; and *Merrymount*, an opera by the American composer Howard Hanson, was presented with great success at the Metropolitan Opera House in the twentieth century.

Much more important was the voice of Roger Williams. Williams was one of the most brilliant thinkers and preachers of the New England colonies, but he was unable to agree with the ruling theocracy on certain fundamental matters. He thought that the civil power rested with the people; to the Mathers this belief was heresy. Furthermore, he believed in the tolerance of any form of religion; the Puritans did not object to other forms of worship so long as they were not in the Puritan part of New England. The Plymouth and the Massachusetts Bay colonies were sacred to Puritanism. It was not surprising, therefore, that Massachusetts soon became intolerable for Williams. He fled to the protection of the Indians and established the colony of Providence (now in Rhode Island) in 1636, the same year the Puritans founded Harvard. In this new colony he put his liberal views into practice.

Williams's chief book is *The Bloudy Tenant*, published in 1644. This book, more than all the works of the Mathers, pointed the way toward the future, because Williams's liberal ideas were destined to supplant the stern doctrine of the Mathers.

**The last great Puritan: Jonathan Edwards.** But the battle was not yet over. There is a tradition in mythology that the last descendant of a family of warriors is always the greatest hero. So it was with the Puritan tradition: its last great champion was its greatest.

Jonathan Edwards was not much interested in politics. He preached in western Massachusetts, far from the political centers of the colonies, and gave himself up to a life of intellectual and religious discipline. When he was ten years old he had written a tract on the nature of the soul. Two years later he had produced an excellent study of the habits of spiders. When he went to his pastorate, after a brilliant career at Yale, he rose at four in the morning, studied thirteen hours a day, and took his only recreation in the form of lonely walks in the woods, during which he wrote down thoughts for later use. Out of this sort of life, however, came sermons which did more than anything else to stem the drift of New England away from the Puritan faith, and books which made Europeans hail him as the greatest mind in America.

For almost a century there had been few conversions to the church in New England; then people from the surrounding country began to flock into Northampton to hear the new minister preach. In De-



cember, 1734, there were suddenly six conversions. The next spring there were thirty a week. The revival spread throughout New England. Even children formed their own religious meetings.

Edwards's most famous sermon was "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," a powerful warning to erring humanity. But he could preach the *love* of God as well as the *fear* of God, and among his surviving sermons are as many on love as on fear and wrath. His nature was essentially sweet and kind. He wrote a charming account of his bride-to-be, and he told the story of his own earlier years in a personal narrative of great beauty. His natural voice was not that which called down the wrath of God upon sinners; he spoke of brimstone only when he thought that was the one way to save a soul.

The work which earned Edwards his most enduring reputation was the great treatise *On the Freedom of the Will* (1754). This book is a philosophical defense of the Puritan beliefs. It is the work of an intellectual giant, one of the most profound books ever written in America. But it came too late. Other forces had so undermined Puritanism that there was no saving it.

## THE BAY PSALM BOOK

The three ministers who edited *The Bay Psalm Book*, adapting Psalms from the Bible for use as songs in their churches, were more interested in fidelity of translation than in poetry. "God's Altar needs not our polishings," they tell us in their preface, "for we have respected rather a plain translation, than to smooth our verses with the sweetness of any paraphrase, and so have attended conscience rather than elegance." It is well that they had the consolations of conscience, for of elegance their versions have none. The only improvement that could be claimed was that their arrangement could be sung to their simple tunes. The beautiful translation of the first Psalm in the King James version of the Bible is printed here that you may compare the two.

### *The Bay Psalm Book*

O Blessed man, that in th' advice  
of wicked doeth not walk;  
nor stand in sinners way, nor sit  
in chayre of scornfull folk,

### *The King James Version*

1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

But in the law of Jehovah,  
is his longing delight:  
and in his law doth meditate,  
by day and eke by night.

2. But his delight is in the law  
of the Lord; and in his law  
doth he meditate day and  
night.

And he shall be like to a tree  
planted by water rivers:  
that in his season yields his fruit,  
and his leaf never withers.

3. And he shall be like a tree  
planted by the rivers of water,  
that bringeth forth his fruit in  
his season; his leaf also shall  
not wither; and whatsoever he  
doeth shall prosper.

And all he doth, shall prosper well,  
the wicked are not so:  
but they are like unto the chaffe,  
which winde drives to and fro.

4. The ungodly are not so: but  
are like the chaff which the  
wind driveth away.

Therefore shall not ungodly men,  
rise to stand in the doome,  
nor shall the sinners with the just,  
in their assemblie come.

5. Therefore the ungodly shall  
not stand in the judgment, nor  
sinners in the congregation of  
the righteous.

For of the righteous men, the Lord  
acknowledgeth the way:  
but the way of ungodly men,  
shall utterly decay.

6. For the Lord knoweth the  
way of the righteous: but the  
way of the ungodly shall  
perish.

## THE NEW ENGLAND PRIMER

In early New England, religion was the center of all instruction. The function of the college was to train ministers, and the purpose of schooling was to teach children to read the Bible. For more than a hundred years *The New England Primer*, known as "The Little Bible," was the basic textbook in Puritan schools. Although we do not know exactly when it was first published, researchers think it was in existence by 1688 and that more than six million copies of its various editions were printed. It was a reading and spelling book combined with primary lessons in religion. School children who studied it committed the following alphabet to memory and chanted it piously in unison. This version is from the 1727 edition.

|   |  |   |   |  |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| A |   | In ADAM'S Fall<br>We sinned all.                        | N |   | NOAH did view<br>The old world & new                   |
| B |   | Heaven to find,<br>The Bible Mind.                      | O |   | Young OBADIAS,<br>DAVID, JOSTAS<br>All were pious.     |
| C |   | Christ crucify'd<br>For sinners dy'd.                   | P |   | PETER deny'd<br>His Lord and cry'd.                    |
| D |   | The Deluge drown'd<br>The Earth around.                 | Q |   | Queen ESTHER sues<br>And saves the Jew.                |
| E |   | ELIJAH hid<br>By Ravens fed.                            | R |   | Young pious RUTH<br>Left all for Truth.                |
| F |   | The judgment made<br>FELIX afraid.                      | S |   | Young SAM'L dear<br>The Lord did fear.                 |
| G |   | As runs the Glass,<br>Our Life doth pass.               | T |   | Young TIMOTHY<br>Learnt sin to fly.                    |
| H |   | My Book and Heart<br>Must never part.                   | U |   | VASTY for Pride,<br>Was set aside.                     |
| I |   | JOB feels the Rod,<br>Yet blesses GOD.                  | W |   | Whales in the Sea,<br>GOD's Voice obey.                |
| K |   | Proud Korah's troop<br>Was swallowed up                 | X |   | XERXES did die,<br>And so must I.                      |
| L |   | LOT fled to Zoar,<br>Saw fiery Shower<br>On Sodom pour. | Y |   | While youth do cheer<br>Death may be near.             |
| M |  | MOSES was he<br>Who Israel's Host<br>Led thro' the Sea. | Z |  | ZACCHAEUS he<br>Did climb the Tree<br>Our Lord to see. |

## SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD

by JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703-1758)

It is easier to understand the admiration of the Puritans for "The Day of Doom" when we see that the most tremendously admired of their preserved sermons pictures with equal vividness the terrible fate that awaits

sinners. A local historian reports that when Jonathan Edwards, the last great Puritan minister, delivered the sermon from which this excerpt was taken, "there was heard such a breathing of distress and weeping, that the preacher was obliged to speak to the people and desire silence that he might be heard." Edwards's delivery is said to have been forceful, but not violent; and his other writings show him to have been of a gentle nature. It is Puritan theology rather than Edwards himself that speaks here, though the power of the language belongs to Edwards.

THE GOD that holds you over the pit of hell much as one holds a spider or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his wrath toward you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times so abominable in his eyes as the most hateful and venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince: and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. 'Tis ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was<sup>1</sup> suffered to awake again in this world after you closed your eyes to sleep and there is no other reason to be given why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you ha'n't gone to hell since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you don't this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in. 'Tis a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

It is *everlasting* wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to

<sup>1</sup> **you was:** often found in eighteenth-century writings for the singular, not then considered illiterate as it is now; **don't** is similarly used for the singular a little farther on.

all eternity: there will be no end to this exquisite, horrible misery. When you look forward you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all; you will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty, merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: for "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh, that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing it would be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons that now sit here in some seats of this meetinghouse in health, and quiet and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell longest, will be there in a little time! Your damnation don't slumber; it will come swiftly and, in all probability, very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. 'Tis doubtless the case of some that heretofore you have seen

and known, that never deserved hell more than you and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their ease is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair. But here you are in the land of the living and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor, damned, hopeless souls give for one day's such opportunity as you now enjoy!

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What was the positive and valuable contribution of the Puritans to the American spirit? Point out places where you discover it in these four selections. Can you point to evidence that any Puritan attitudes are still alive in your community?

2. In your own reading and writing which do you prefer to have emphasized, "conscience" or "elegance"? If you had to give up one or the other, which would you sacrifice? Which selection comes nearest combining the two?

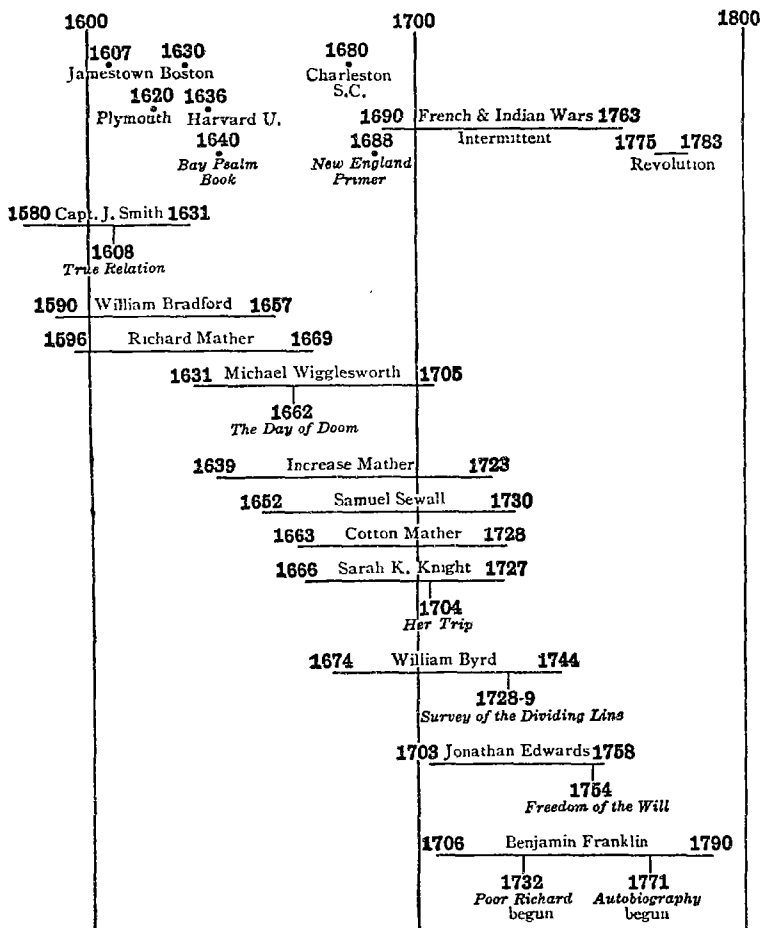
3. What other famous American schoolbooks besides *The New England Primer* have you heard of? Do you know what most of the early readers had in common with the *Primer*?

4. Did you discover why Puritan theology was really exciting? Do you think you could go to sleep in church if Jonathan Edwards were preaching? Would he be an interesting preacher Sunday after Sunday? Why?

### For Your Vocabulary

5. Jonathan Edwards says that "sinners in the hands of an angry God" must despair of any *mitigation* (page 858) of their hard lot, of that lot's ever becoming milder. We use several different forms of this word. More frequent than the verb *mitigate* (to make mild) is the participle *mitigating*, usually applied to circumstances. It would be a *mitigating* circumstance in a burglary, for example, if the offender was a man who stole only food to feed a starving family. Offenses are described as *unmitigated* when there is no excuse for them; but qualities may also be *unmitigated*, as "*unmitigated* harshness," and the word is also applied to people, as in "*an unmitigated* liar." To the "horse and buggy" doctor, the early automobiles were an *unmitigated* nuisance (page 444). Do you remember why? What did Hamlin Garland mean when he called the storm winds on the prairies *immitigable* (page 414)?

## COLONIAL LIFE AND LITERATURE



## 3. Journals and Diaries

We moderns do not often stop to think that Americans lived in this country as colonists under the British rule as long a time as they have lived since under their own government. But such is the case. If you think of the great changes that have taken place in American life since

1776, you will be prepared to find that later colonial writings reflect a life far advanced in comforts of civilization from the state of the first rude settlements, even though it may still seem very rough and hard by present-day standards. No other form of literature gives so much interesting detail of people's way of living as their journals and diaries, full of day-by-day interests and activities. As life in the colonies grew more settled and therefore more leisurely, several Americans found time to keep such records.

**Samuel Sewall.** A New England that had developed well-established traditions is revealed in the diary of Samuel Sewall, a judge and prominent citizen in Boston. His intimate record of his daily life reveals, along with a wealth of information about his own affairs and those of the town, how the early Puritan type was developing into the Yankee. He was devout and sincere, but he was also worldly-minded. He tells of reading the Bible and going to church and carrying on discussions with the ministers, but he also includes much that a Puritan of fifty years before would not have set down — shrewd observations about his friends and his courtships (he was married three times), his business transactions, his journeys, and even the price of a present he gave his beloved. But do not let his worldly interests give you a false impression of his character. Sewall had been one of the judges at the Salem witchcraft trials and had joined in sentencing those poor victims of superstition to death. But his mind was never easy about the trials, and years later he stood in his place in church and had the minister read a public confession of his error to the congregation. Such a deed could come only from a man of great sincerity and great courage. The records set down by such a man necessarily command our respect, as the vivid pictures of early New England life command our interest.

**Sarah Kemble Knight.** Nowadays swift airplanes make countless round trips every day between Boston and New York, taking less than two hours between cities. Men living in Boston can eat breakfast at home, fly to New York, attend to a full day's business, and be back at home for dinner. But in 1704, when Mrs. Sarah Kemble Knight made a trip from Boston to New Haven, thence to New York, and back to Boston, the trip took five months. There were no airplanes then, no express trains, not even stagecoaches. She traveled on horseback. The slow journey had its compensations for a diarist, however, for she had an excellent opportunity to observe the countryside and the people. She watched it all with a sharp eye, and she set down her impressions with an equally sharp pen.



Colonel William Byrd. For the clearest picture of life in the Southern colonies we are indebted to William Byrd, a distinguished member of a prominent Virginia family, which in our own times has given us the Antarctic explorer Richard Byrd. William Byrd was educated in England, and after his return to Virginia built up the finest private library in that time. It came naturally to him to write of his various undertakings. The work which is most read is *A History of the Dividing Line*, an account of the surveying of the boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina in 1728-29. The country was not completely cleared, and part of the route of the surveying party led through unexplored swamps and forests. Not only the vivid description of this hinterland makes the narrative good reading, but also his comments on life in the edge of Carolina, which this Virginia aristocrat did not find altogether worthy of admiration.

### SAMUEL SEWALL'S DIARY

The diary of Samuel Sewall (1652-1730), like that of the great English diarist, Samuel Pepys, with which it is often compared, was not kept for others to read but only for the author's private information and pleasure. Such a diary is always more natural than one designed for others' eyes. Sewall wrote with no thought of the impression he was making, recording honestly what seemed to him noteworthy in his daily round — the weather, the governor's hat blowing off, the sacramental bread rattling in the plate, his health, along with matters of greater moment. Bit by bit we fill in the picture of life in seventeenth-century Boston, and also a portrait of an important citizen named Samuel Sewall.

These entries are taken from various places in the diary, which in its entirety fills three fat volumes. They illustrate well the type of happening he usually saw fit to record, and also some typical reactions of his own. The spelling and capitalization follow the original diary, and reveal yet other changes in American ways in the course of two hundred years.

*Thursday, November 12 [1677].* The Ministers of this Town come to the Court and complain against a Dancing Master who seeks to set up here and hath mixt Dances, and his time of Meeting is Lecture-Day; and 'tis reported he should say that by one Play he could teach more Divinity than Mr. Willard of the Old Testament. Mr. Moodey said 'twas time for N.E. to dance. Mr. Mather<sup>1</sup> struck at the Root, speaking against mixt Dances.

*Friday, 22.* Two persons, one array'd in white, the other in red,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Mather: Increase Mather, then pastor of the North Church in Boston.

## EARLIEST AMERICAN HOMES

The homes of Pueblo Indians have a strong resemblance to the old community houses of cliff-dwellers, the oldest of existing American homes.

*Ewing Galloway*



When Jedediah Smith was living with the mission priests in California, he was probably housed in quarters like these, along the cloisters. (See page 999.)

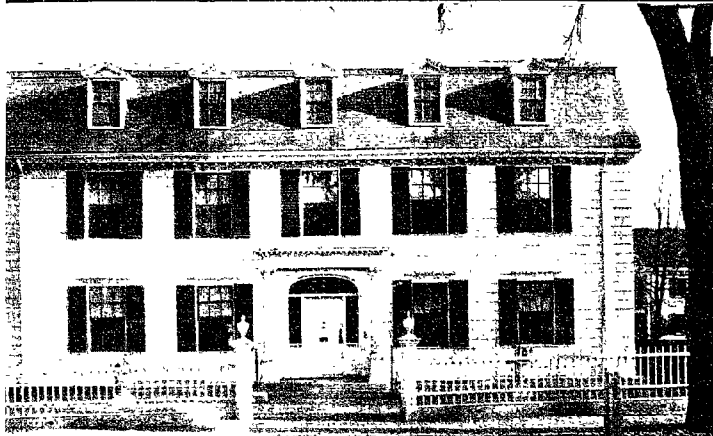
*Culver*



The log cabin of the westward moving pioneers was rough but it was sturdy. In this one Abraham Lincoln's father and mother were married.

*Ewing Galloway*





*Photos, Culver*



CLASSIC COLONIAL TYPES. Homes built by the more prosperous early Americans possessed a fine dignity and simplicity that made the type a lasting favorite with home-builders all over the country. Americans are still building homes like these. The New England types above have much in common with the Southern home at the left, except for the wide, columned porches needed in the warmer Southern climate.

*Ewing Galloway*



*Photos, Culver*

GINGERBREAD AND BROWNSTONE. Elaborate ornamentation was the style in homes as well as in furniture and dress in the late decades of the nineteenth century. Towers and gingerbread fretwork like those pictured in the homes above were the height of fashion. Unlike the simple colonial types, these left no lasting influence on modern architecture. In the same era rows of brownstone residences were springing up in cities. The lively Clarence Day family (see page 260) lived in a home much like the one at the right.

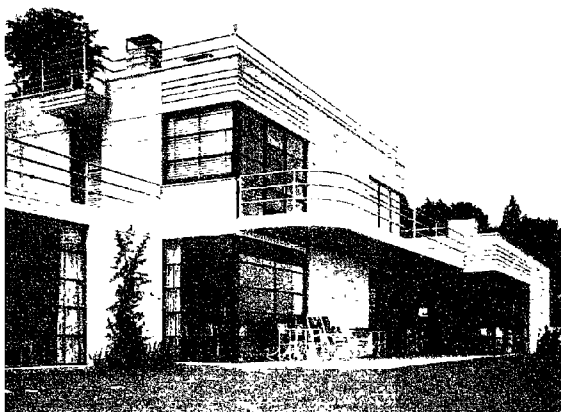




## MODERN DWELLINGS

Modern homes in America show many influences of earlier days. This California house draws its inspiration from the Spanish.

*By De Cou, Ewing Galloway*



The strongest trend, however, is toward a new sort of natural simplicity that relies on clean lines and inside comfort for its charm—American Modern.

*By De Cou, Ewing Galloway*



Not external beauty but fresh air, sunlight, and comfort are the ideals set up by Federal Housing Projects like this one for families whose income is small.

*Ewing Galloway*

goe through the Town with naked Swords advanced, with a Drum attending each of them, and a Quarter Staff, and a great rout following as is usual. It seems 'tis a chaleng to be fought at Capt. Wing's next Thursday.

*Oct. 18.* Carried Mother Hull behind me<sup>1</sup> to Roxbury-Lecture; Mr. Joseph Eliot preached. House not very full because of the rawness and uncertainty of the day.

*Apr. 2, 1688.* Mr. Robert Sanderson rides with me to Neponset, and gives me Livery and Seisin<sup>2</sup> of his 8th of the powder-mill Stream, Dwelling-House and Land on each side of the River, Mr. Jn<sup>o</sup>. Fayerwether, Desire Clap, and Walter Everenden, witnesses, having the Deed there and exhibiting it, when he gave me Turf, Twigg, and Splinter.<sup>3</sup>

*Sabbath, Nov. 25, 1694.* I named my little Daughter Sarah, Mr. Willard baptiz'd her. I was struggling whether to call her Sarah or Mehetabel; but when I saw Sarah's standing in the Scripture, I resolv'd on that side.

*March 29, 1695.* Went to the Meeting at Mr. Olivers: Major Walley sat next me, and presently after the Exercise, ask'd me if I heard the sad News from England, and then told me the Queen<sup>4</sup> was dead, which was the first I heard of it. It seems Capt. Allen arriv'd yesterday at Marblehead, who brought the News, and fill'd the Town with it this day. It seems the Queen died on the 27th of December, having been sick four days of the Small Pocks.

*Second Day, Jan 6<sup>th</sup> 1695/6.*<sup>5</sup> Kept a Day of Fasting for the Conversion of my Son, and his settlement in a Trade that might be good for Soul and Body.

*July 15, 1698.* This day John Ive, fishing in great Spie-Pond, is arrested with mortal sickness which renders him in a manner speechless and senseless; dies next day! buried at Charlestown on the Wednesday. Was a very debauched and atheistical man. I was not at his Funeral. Had Gloves sent me,<sup>6</sup> but the knowledge of his no-

<sup>1</sup> Carried Mother Hull behind me: on horseback. <sup>2</sup> Livery and Seisin: delivery of the deed and possession of the property. <sup>3</sup> Turf, Twigg, and Splinter: to signify that the land, its timber, and the buildings on it were included in the trade. <sup>4</sup> the Queen: Queen Mary. Because she ruled jointly with her husband, their reign is called that of William and Mary. <sup>5</sup> 1695/6: before 1752, January 1 was the beginning of the year only according to popular reckoning, the legal and ecclesiastical year beginning on March 25. In 1752, January 1 was made the legal beginning. For some time dates between January 1 and March 25 were written with both the old and the new year indicated. <sup>6</sup> Gloves sent me: for use in serving as a pallbearer. The Ring mentioned later would have been a reward for serving.

toriously wicked life made me sick of going; and Mr. Mather, the president, came in just as I was ready to step out, and so I staid at home, and by that means lost a Ring: but hope had no loss.

*Fourth-day, June 19. 1700.* Having been long and much dissatisfied with the Trade of fetching Negros from Guinea; at last I had a strong Inclination to Write something about it: but it wore off. At last reading Bayne, Ephes.<sup>1</sup> about servants, who mentions Blackamoors, I began to be uneasy that I had so long neglected doing any thing. When I was thus thinking, in came Bro<sup>r</sup> Belknap to shew me a Petition he intended to present to the Gen<sup>l</sup> Court for the freeing a Negro and his wife, who were unjustly held in Bondage. And there is a Motion by a Boston Committee to get a Law that all Importers of Negros shall pay 40<sup>s</sup> p head, to discourage the bringing of them. And Mr. C. Mather resolves to publish a sheet to exhort Masters to labour their Conversion. Which makes me hope that I was call'd of God to Write this Apology for them; Let his Blessing accompany the same.

*Tuesday, June, 10<sup>th</sup>.* Having last night heard that Josiah Willard<sup>2</sup> had cut off his hair (a very full head of hair) and put on a Wigg, I went to him this morning. Told his Mother what I came about, and she call'd him. I enquired of him what Extremity had forced him to put off his own hair, and put on a Wigg? He answered, none at all. But said that his Hair was straight, and that it parted behinde. Seem'd to argue that men might as well shave their hair off their head, as off their faces. God seems to have ordain'd our Hair as a Test, to see whether we can bring our minds to be content at his finding: or whether we would be our own Carvers, Lords, and come no more at Him. If disliked our Skin, or Nails, 'tis no Thanks to us, that for all that, we cut them not off: Pain and danger restrain us. Your Calling is to teach men self Denial. Twill be displeasing and burdensome to good men: And they that care not what men think of them care not what God thinks of them. Pray'd him to read the Tenth Chapter of the Third book of Calvins Institutions. He seem'd to say would leave off his Wigg when his hair was grown. I spake to his Father of it a day or two after: He thank'd me that had discoursed his Son, and told me that when his hair was grown to cover his ears, he promis'd to leave off his Wigg. If he had known of it, would have

<sup>1</sup> Bayne, Ephes.: the commentary of Paul Bayne, an English divine, on the first chapter of *Ephesians*, dealing largely with the controversy on predestination

<sup>2</sup> Josiah Willard: son of the preacher at the South Church, which Sewall often attended.

forbidden him. His Mother heard him talk of it: but was afraid positively to forbid him, lest he should do it, and so be more faulty.

*March 16. 1702/3.* Though all things look horribly winterly by reason of a great storm of Snow, hardly yet over, and much on the Ground, yet the Robins cheerfully utter their Notes this morn. So should we patiently and cheerfully sing the Praises of God, and hope in his Mercys.

*Second-Day; Jan<sup>y</sup> 24.* I Paid Capt. Belchar £8-15-0. Took 24<sup>s</sup> in my pocket, and gave my Wife the rest of my cast 4.3-8, and tell her she shall now keep the Cash; if I want I will borrow of her. She has a better faculty than I at managing Affairs: I will assist her; and will endeavour to live upon my Salary; will see what it will doe. The Lord give his Blessing.

*July 6, 1714/15.* This day it is Fifty four years Since I first was brought ashore to Boston near where Scarlet's wharf now is, July 6, 1661, Lord's Day. The Lord help me to Redeem the Time which passes so swiftly. I was then a poor little Schoolboy of Nine years and  $\frac{1}{4}$  old.

*April 1, 1719.* In the morning I dehorted Sam. Hirst and Grindal Rawson from playing Idle Tricks because 'twas first of April; They were the greatest fools that did so. N.E. Men came hither to avoid anniversary days, the keeping of them, such as the 25th of Dec<sup>r</sup>. How displeasing it must be to God, the giver of our Time, to keep anniversary days, to play the fool with ourselves and others. p.m. John Arcus brings me a superscribed paper, wherein were a pair of very good white Kid's Leather Gloves, and a Gold Ring with four penny weight wanting 3 Grains, with this Motto, *Lcx et Libertas*. I have received 4. Presents lately; 4 Oranges, 2 Pieces of Salmon, Madame Foxcroft's Wedding Cake; and this which is a very fair Present indeed. I have hardly any to compare with it. The good Lord help me to serve faithfully the Supream Donor!

## SARAH KEMBLE KNIGHT'S JOURNAL

Sarah Kemble Knight (1666-1727) was exceptionally independent and enterprising for a woman in colonial New England. Her husband was a shipmaster, and during his long absences Madam Knight was occupied with undertakings of her own, including keeping a shop and teaching a school at which, according to tradition, Benjamin Franklin was a pupil. It was because of her practical experience and knowledge that she under-



took her celebrated trip to New York in 1704, for she went to help settle up the estate of a kinsman. On every page of her journal of the trip are evident the keenness of her observation and the liveliness of her imagination. Capable and energetic as she was, it is no wonder that she felt free to sit in judgment on less able fellow Americans she encountered along the way.

In these selections Madam Knight's original spelling and capitalization have been preserved.

#### STRANGE CUSTOMS OF CONNECTICUT

*Saturday, Oct. 7<sup>th</sup>*, wee sett out early in the Morning, and being something unaquainted with the way, having ask't it of some wee mett, they told us wee must Ride a mile or two and turne down a Lane on the Right hand; and by their Direction wee Rode on but not Yet coming to the turning, we mett a Young fellow and ask't him how farr it was to the Lane which turn'd down towards Guilford. Hee said wee must Ride a little further, and turn down by the Corner of uncle Sams Lott. My Guide vented his Spleen at the Lubber; and we soon after came into the Rhode, and keeping still on, without any thing further Remarkebell, about two a clock afternoon we arrived at New Haven, where I was received with all Posible Respects and civility. Here I discharged Mr. Wheeler with a reward to his satisfaction, and took some time to rest after so long and toilsome a Journey; And Inform'd myselfe of the manners and customs of the place, and at the same time employed myselfe in the affair I went there upon.

They are Govern'd by the same Laws as wee in Boston, (or little differing,) thr'out this whole Colony of Connecticot, And much the same way of Church Government, and many of them good, Sociable people, and I hope Religious too: but a little too much Independant in their principalls, and, as I have been told, were formerly in their Zeal very Riggid in their Administrations towards such as their Lawes made Offenders, even to a harmless Kiss or Innocent merriment among Young People. Whipping being a frequent and counted an easy Punishment, about which, as other Crimes, the Judges were absolute in their Sentances. Their Diversions in this part of the Country are on Lecture days<sup>1</sup> and Training days mostly: on the former there is Riding from town to town.

<sup>1</sup> **Lecture days:** Thursdays were so called because of the regular midweek religious lecture.

And on training dayes The Youth divert themselves by Shooting at the Target, as they call it, (but it very much resembles a pillory,) where hee that hitti nearest the white has some yards of Red Ribbin presented him, which being tied to his hattband, the two ends streeming down his back, he is Led away in Triumph, with great applause, as the winners of the Olympiack Games.<sup>1</sup> They generally marry very young: the males oftener as I am told under twentie than above; they generally make public weddings, and have a way something singular (as they say) in some of them, viz. Just before Joyning hands the Bridegroom quits the place, who is soon followed by the Bridesmen, and as it were, dragg'd back to duty — being the reverse to the former practice among us, to steal Mrs. Bride.

There are great plenty of Oysters all along by the sea side, as farr as I Rode in the Collony, and those very good. And they Generally lived very well and comfortably in their famelies. But too Indulgent (especially the farmers) to their slaves: sufering too great familiarity from them, permitting them to sit at Table and eat with them, (as they say to save time,) and into the dish goes the black as freely as the white hand. They told me that there was a farmer lived nere the Town where I lodgd who had some difference with his slave, concerning something the master had promised him and did not punctually perform; which caused some hard words between them; But at length they put the matter to Arbitration and Bound themselves to stand to the award of such as they named — which done, the Arbitrators Having heard the Allegations of both parties, Order the master to pay 40s to black face, and acknowledge his fault. And so the matter ended: the poor master very honestly standing to the award.

There are every where in the Towns as I passed, a Number of Indians the Natives of the Country, and are the most salvage of all the salvages of that kind that I had ever Seen: little or no care taken (as I heard upon enquiry) to make them otherwise. They have in some places Landes of their owne, and Govern'd by Law's of their own making; — they marry many wives and at pleasure put them away, and on the least dislike or fickle humor, on either side, saying *stand away* to one another is a sufficient Divorce. And indeed those uncomely *Stand aways* are too much in Vogue among the English in this [Indulgent Colony] as their Records plentifully prove, and that on very trivial matters, of which some have been told me, but are not

<sup>1</sup> **Olympiack Games:** The Greeks held great athletic festivals every four years, beginning in 776 B.C., at Olympia. It is from these that the modern Olympic games take their name.

proper to be Related by a Female pen, tho some of that foolish sex have had too large a share in the story.

If the natives committ any crime on their own precincts among themselves, the English takes no Cognenzens <sup>1</sup> of. But if on the English ground, they are punishable by our Laws. They mourn for their Dead by blacking their faces, and cutting their hair, after an Awkerd and frightfull manner; But can't bear You should mention the names of their dead Relations to them: they trade most for Rum, for which they'd hazzard their very lives; and the English fit them Generally as well, by seasoning it plentifully with water.

They give the title of merchant to every trader; who Rate their Goods according to the time and spetia <sup>2</sup> they pay in: viz. Pay, mony, Pay as mony, and trusting. *Pay* is Grain, Pork, Beef, &c. at prices sett by the General Court that Year; *mony* is pieces of Eight, <sup>3</sup> Ryalls, or Boston or Bay shillings (as they call them,) or Good hard money, as sometimes silver coin is termed by them; also Wampom, vizt. Indian beads which serves for change. *Pay as mony* is provisions, as aforesaid one Third cheaper then as the Assembly or General Court sets it; and *Trust* as they and the merchant agree for time.

Now, when the buyer comes to ask for a comodity, sometimes before the merchant answers that he has it, he sais, *is Your pay redy?* Perhaps the Chap Reply's Yes: what do You pay in? say's the merchant. The buyer having answered, then the price is set; as suppose he wants a sixpenny knife, in pay it is 12d — in pay as money eight pence, and hard money its own price, viz. 6d. It seems a very Intricate way of trade and what *Lex Mercatoria* <sup>4</sup> had not thought of.

Being at a merchants house, in come a tall country fellow, with his alfogeos <sup>5</sup> full of Tobacco; for they seldom Loose their Cudd, but keep Chewing and Spitting as long as they're eyes are open, — he advancing to the middle of the Room, makes an Awkward Nodd, and spitting a Large deal of Aromatick Tincture, he gave a scrape with his shovel like shoo, leaving a small shovel full of dirt on the floor, made a full stop, Hugging his own pretty Body with his hands under his arms, Stood staring rownd him, like a Catt let out of a Baskett. At last, like the creature <sup>6</sup> Balamm Rode on, he opened his mouth and said: have You any Ribinen for Hatbands to sell I pray? The Questions and Answers about the pay being past, the Ribin is bro't and opened. Bumpkin Simperts, cryes its confounded Gay I vow;

<sup>1</sup> Cognenzens: cognizance. In other words, the English pay no attention to these crimes. <sup>2</sup> spetia: specie; coin. <sup>3</sup> pieces of Eight: Spanish dollars containing eight reals, worth ninety-six cents. <sup>4</sup> *Lex Mercatoria*: the law of merchants <sup>5</sup> alfogeos: Spanish saddlebags; here humorously used for cheeks. <sup>6</sup> creature: a famous ass in the Bible, which could speak (Num. 22:21-33).

and beckning to the door, in comes Jone Tawdry<sup>1</sup> dropping about 50 curtsees, and stands by him: hee shows her the Ribin. *Law, You, sais shee, its right Gent,*<sup>2</sup> do You, take it, *tis dreadfully pretty*. Then she enquires, *have you any hood silk I pray?* which being brought and bought, *Have You any thred silk to sew it with* says shee, which being accommodated with they Departed. They Generally stand after they come in a great while speachless, and sometimes dont say a word till they are askt what they want, which I impute to the Awe they stand in of the merchants, who they are constantly almost Indebted too; and must take what they bring without Liberty to choose for themselves; but they serve them as well, making the merchants stay long enough for their pay.

We may Observe here the great necessity and bennifitt both of Education and Conversation; for these people have as Large a portion of mother witt, and sometimes a Larger, than those who have bin brought up in Citties; But for want of emprovements, Render themselves almost Ridiculos, as above. I should be glad if they would leave such follies, and am sure all that Love Clean Houses (at least) would be glad on't too.

They are generally very plain in their dress, throuout all the Colony, as I saw, and follow one another in their modes; that You may know where they belong especially the women, meet them where you will.

Their Chief Red Letter day is St. Election,<sup>3</sup> which is annually Observed according to Charter, to choose their Govenr: a blessing<sup>4</sup> they can never be thankfull enough for, as they will find, if ever it be their hard fortune to loose it. The present Governor in Conecticott is the Honorable John Winthrop Esq. A Gentleman of an Ancient and Honourable Family, whose Father was Govenor here sometime before, and his Grand father had bin Govr of the Massachusetts. This gentleman is a very curteous and afable person, much Given to Hospitality, and has by his Good services Gain'd the affections of the people as much as any who had bin before him in that post.

#### HARDSHIPS OF TRAVEL

*Decr. 6th.* Being by this time well Recruited and rested after my Journy, my business lying unfinished by some concerns at New York depending thereupon, my Kinsman, Mr. Thomas Trowbridge of New

<sup>1</sup> *Jone Tawdry*: humorous name for the countrygirl. <sup>2</sup> *Gent*: a rustic abbreviation for genteel or elegant. <sup>3</sup> *St. Election*: a humorous way of indicating that an election was as religiously observed as a saint's day in a Catholic country. <sup>4</sup> *blessing*: In Massachusetts the governor was appointed by the king, to the great dissatisfaction of the colony.

Haven, must needs take a Journy there before it could be accomplished, I resolved to go there in company with him, and a man of the town which I engaged to wait on me there. Accordingly, Dec. 6th we set out from New Haven, and about 11 the same morning came to Stratford ferry; which crossing, about two miles on the other side Baited our horses and would have eat a morsell ourselves, But the Pumpkin and Indian mixt Bred had such an Aspect, and the Bare-legg'd Punch so awkerd or rather Awful a sound, that we left both, and proceeded forward, and about seven at night come to Fairfield, where we met with good entertainment and Lodg'd; and early next morning set forward to Norowalk, from its halfe Indian name *North-walk*, when about 12 at noon we arrived, and Had a Dinner of Fried Venison, very savoury. Landlady wanting some pepper in the seasoning, bid the Girl hand her the spice in the little *Gay* cupp on the shelve. From hence we Hasted towards Rye, walking and Leading our Horses neer a mile together, up a prodigios high Hill; and so Riding till about nine at night, and there arrived and took up our Lodgings at an ordinary,<sup>1</sup> which a French family kept. Here being very hungry, I desired a fricasee which the Frenchman undertakeing, mannaged so contrary to my notion of Cookery, that I hastned to Bed superless; And being shewd the way up a pair of stairs which had such a narrow passage that I had almost stopt by the Bulk of my Body; But arriving at my apartment found it to be a little Lento<sup>2</sup> Chamber furnisht amongst other Rubbish with a High Bedd and a Low one, a Long Table, a Bench and a Bottomless chair, — Little Miss went to scratch up my Kennell<sup>3</sup> which Russelled as if shee'd bin in the Barn amongst the Husks, and supose such was the contents of the tickin — nevertheless being exceedingly weary, down I laid my poor Carkes (never more tired) and found my Covering as scanty as my Bed was hard. Annon I heard another Russelling noise in The Room — called to know the matter — Little miss said shee was making a bed for the men; who, when they were in Bed, complained their leggs lay out of it by reason of its shortness — my poor bones complained bitterly not being used to such Lodgings, and so did the man who was with us; and poor I made but one Grone, which was from the time I went to bed to the time I Riss, which was about three in the morning, Setting up by the Fire till Light, and having discharged our ordinary<sup>4</sup> which was as dear as if we had had far Better

<sup>1</sup> ordinary: an inn. <sup>2</sup> Lento: a lean-to room, or one under a low, sloping roof.

<sup>3</sup> scratch up my Kennell: humorous for shake up my mattress. <sup>4</sup> discharged our ordinary: paid the bill.

fare — wee took our leave of Monsieur and about seven in the morn come to New Rochell a french town, where we had a good Breakfast. And in the strength of that about an how'r before sunsett got to York. Here I applyd myself to Mr. Burroughs, a merchant to whom I was recommended by my Kinsman Capt. Prout, and received great Civilities from him and his spouse, who were now both Deaf but very agreeable in their Conversation, Diverting me with pleasant stories of their knowledge in Brittan from whence they both come.

## A HISTORY OF THE DIVIDING LINE

by COLONEL WILLIAM BYRD (1674-1744)

Colonel William Byrd was one of the commissioners in charge of running the boundary line between the colonies of Virginia and Carolina, which is still the boundary between the states. He accompanied the expedition in person and watched over its activities, but he also observed the surrounding country and its inhabitants. He writes from the point of view of the aristocrat. Democracy was not yet established upon these shores; and as the colonies developed socially and economically, they naturally followed patterns of life they were accustomed to in England. Both the estate he inherited and his own distinguished service to the colony entitled Byrd to a place in the aristocracy. His background and wide reading also contributed to the development of a more polished style than is displayed by the other colonial keepers of journals. You can see this difference for yourself as you go with him along the new boundary line.

### CAMP LIFE

*March 12 [1728]. . . .* Our landlord <sup>1</sup> had a tolerable good house and clean furniture, and yet we could not be tempted to lodge in it. We chose rather to lie in the open field, for fear of growing too tender. A clear sky, spangled with stars, was our canopy which, being the last thing we saw before we fell asleep, gave us magnificent dreams. The truth of it is, we took so much pleasure in that natural kind of lodging that I think at the foot of the account mankind are great losers by the luxury of feather beds and warm apartments.

The curiosity of beholding so new and withal so sweet a method

<sup>1</sup> *landlord*: a plantation owner named Ballance.

of encamping, brought one of the senators of North Carolina to make us a midnight visit. But he was so very clamorous in his commendations of it that the sentinel, not seeing his quality, either through his habit or behavior, had like to have treated him roughly.

After excusing the unseasonableness of his visit, and letting us know he was a Parliament man, he swore he was so taken with our lodging that he would set fire to his house as soon as he got home and teach his wife and children to lie, like us, in the open field.

### THE DISMAL SWAMP

*March 14.* Before nine of the clock this morning, the provisions, bedding, and other necessities, were made up into packs for the men to carry on their shoulders into the Dismal. They were victualed for eight days at full allowance, nobody doubting but that would be abundantly sufficient to carry them through that inhospitable place; nor indeed was it possible for the poor fellows to stagger under more. As it was, their loads weighed from sixty to seventy pounds, in just proportion to the strength of those who were to bear them.

'Twould have been unconscionable to have saddled them with burthens heavier than that, when they were to lug them through a filthy bog which was hardly practicable with no burthen at all. Besides this luggage at their backs, they were obliged to measure the distance, mark the trees, and clear the way for the surveyors every step they went. It was really a pleasure to see with how much cheerfulness they undertook, and with how much spirit they went through all this drudgery. For their greater safety, the commissioners took care to furnish them with Peruvian bark, rhubarb, and hipocoacanah,<sup>1</sup> in case they might happen, in that wet journey, to be taken with fevers or fluxes.

Although there was no need of example to inflame persons already so cheerful, yet, to enter the people with better grace, the author and two more of the commissioners accompanied them half a mile into the Dismal. The skirts of it were thinly planted with dwarf reeds and gall bushes but, when we got into the Dismal itself, we found the reeds grew there much taller and closer and, to mend the matter, was so interlaced with bamboo briars that there was no scuffling through them without the help of pioneers. At the same time, we found the ground moist and trembling under our feet like a quag-

<sup>1</sup> *hipocoacanah*: known today as *ipecac*.

mire, insomuch that it was an easy matter to run a ten-foot pole up to the head in it, without exerting any uncommon strength to do it.

Two of the men, whose burthens were the least cumbersome, had orders to march before with their tomahawks and clear the way, in order to make an opening for the surveyors. By their assistance we made a shift to push the line half a mile in three hours, and then reached a small piece of firm land about one hundred yards wide standing up above the rest like an island. Here the people were glad to lay down their loads and take a little refreshment, while the happy man whose lot it was to carry the jug of rum began already, like Aesop's bread-carriers,<sup>1</sup> to find it grow a good deal lighter.

After reposing about an hour, the commissioners recommended vigor and constancy to their fellow travelers, by whom they were answered with three cheerful huzzas in token of obedience. This ceremony was no sooner over but they took up their burthens and attended the motion of the surveyors who, though they worked with all their might, could reach but one mile farther, the same obstacles still attending them which they had met with in the morning.

However small this distance may seem to such as are used to travel at their ease, yet our poor men, who were obliged to work with an unwieldy load at their backs, had reason to think it a long way; especially in a bog where they had no firm footing, but every step made a deep impression, which was instantly filled with water. At the same time they were laboring with their hands to cut down the reeds, which were ten feet high, their legs were hampered with the briars. Besides, the weather happened to be very warm, and the tallness of the reeds kept off every friendly breeze from coming to refresh them. And, indeed, it was a little provoking to hear the wind whistling among the branches of the white cedars, which grew here and there amongst the reeds, and at the same time not have the comfort to feel the least breath of it.

In the meantime the three commissioners returned out of the Dismal the same way they went in and, having joined their brethren, proceeded that night as far as Mr. Wilson's.

This worthy person lives within sight of the Dismal, in the skirts whereof his stocks range and maintain themselves all the winter, and yet he knew as little of it as he did of *Terra Australis Incognita*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Aesop's bread-carriers: According to the fable the man who wanted the lightest burden on the journey was laughed at for choosing the bread, which was the heaviest; but by night the bread had all been distributed and he had only the empty basket to carry. <sup>2</sup> *Terra Australis Incognita*: unknown southern land, such as Byrd's descendant has lately explored.



He told us a Canterbury tale<sup>1</sup> of a North Briton whose curiosity spurred him a long way into this great desert, as he called it, near twenty years ago, but he having no compass, nor seeing the sun for several days together, wandered about till he was almost famished; but at last he bethought himself of a secret his countrymen make use of to pilot themselves in a dark day.

He took a fat louse out of his collar and exposed it to the open day on a piece of white paper which he brought along with him for his journal. The poor insect, having no eyelids, turned himself about till he found the darkest part of the heavens, and so made the best of his way toward the north. By this direction he steered himself safe out, and gave such a frightful account of the monsters he saw and the distresses he underwent, that no mortal since has been hardy enough to go upon the like dangerous discovery.

#### NORTH CAROLINA PLANTATION LIFE

*March 25.* . . . In the mean time, we who stayed behind had nothing to do but to make the best observations we could upon that part of the country. The soil of our landlord's plantation, though none of the best, seemed more fertile than any thereabouts, where the ground is near as sandy as the deserts of Africa, and consequently barren. The road leading from thence to Edenton, being in distance about twenty-seven miles, lies upon a ridge called Sandy Ridge, which is so wretchedly poor that it will not bring potatoes.

The pines in this part of the country are of a different species from those that grow in Virginia: their bearded leaves are much longer and their cones much larger. Each cell contains a seed of the size and figure of a black-eyed pea, which, shedding in November, is very good mast for hogs, and fattens them in a short time.

The smallest of these pines are full of cones, which are eight or nine inches long, and each affords commonly sixty or seventy seeds. This kind of mast has the advantage of all other by being more constant, and less liable to be nipped by the frost or eaten by the caterpillars. The trees also abound more with turpentine, and consequently yield more tar than either the yellow or the white pine; and for the same reason make more durable timber for building. The inhabitants hereabouts pick up knots of lightwood in abundance, which they burn

<sup>1</sup> *Canterbury tale*: here an incredible tale. The *Canterbury Tales* were famous old stories recounted in verse by the first great English poet, Chaucer. The reference shows Byrd's literary education.

into tar, and then carry it to Norfolk or Nansimond for a market. The tar made in this method is the less valuable because it is said to burn the cordage, though it is full as good for all other uses as that made in Sweden and Muscovy.

Surely there is no place in the world where the inhabitants live with less labor than in North Carolina. It approaches nearer to the description of Lubberland<sup>1</sup> than any other, by the great felicity of the climate, the easiness of raising provisions, and the slothfulness of the people.

Indian corn is of so great increase that a little pains will subsist a very large family with bread, and then they may have meat without any pains at all, by the help of low grounds, and the great variety of mast that grows on the high land. The men for their parts, just like the Indians, impose all the work upon the poor women. They make their wives rise out of their beds early in the morning, at the same time that they lie and snore till the sun has run one-third of his course and dispersed all the unwholesome damps. Then, after stretching and yawning for half an hour, they light their pipes, and, under the protection of a cloud of smoke, venture out into the open air; though, if it happens to be never so little cold, they quickly return shivering into the chimney corner. When the weather is mild, they stand leaning with both their arms upon the cornfield fence, and gravely consider whether they had best go and take a small heat at the hoe: but generally find reasons to put it off till another time.

Thus they loiter away their lives, like Solomon's sluggard<sup>2</sup> with their arms across, and at the winding up of the year scarcely have bread to eat.

To speak the truth, 'tis a thorough aversion to labor that makes people file off to North Carolina, where plenty and warm sun confirm them in their disposition to laziness for their whole lives.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What signs of old Puritan attitudes are reflected in these entries? What signs of the new practical worldliness? Discuss whether or not life among the Puritans seems entirely solemn and serious. What attitudes expressed in any of the three diaries are changed today?

<sup>1</sup> **Lubberland**: a paradise for lazy fellows. The following comments on the natives show the antipathy between the aristocratic Virginians and the small farmers of North Carolina, who were largely former servants. <sup>2</sup> **Solomon's sluggard**: King Solomon said, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways and be wise" (Prov. 6:6).

2. *Sewall's diary*: How long did it take New England to hear of the death of the Queen? What effect do you think the distance between the colonies and the mother country had on the relations between them? What did you think of Sewall's arguments against cutting one's hair to wear a wig? What would you have answered if you had been young Mr. Willard?

3. *Madam Knight's diary*: What conditions in Connecticut did Madam Knight find inferior to those in Massachusetts, and what others did she find preferable? On the whole, would you consider her tolerant or intolerant? Discuss the difficulties of travel of her day. Have we any comparable difficulties today? If so, what?

4. *Byrd's diary*: Point out evidences of Byrd's energy, of his sense of humor, of his London education. What passage shows most clearly how far Byrd's own life had changed from pioneer conditions?

5. Each of the three diarists shows that he feels superior to some of the people he encounters, but each of the three has a different reason for this feeling. What is it, in each case?

#### *For Ambitious Students*

6. Do you think Sewall and Madam Knight would have enjoyed each other's company? Write up an encounter between the two on the subject of Josiah Willard's wig — letting them have an argument if you think they would have been on different sides of the question, or join in being scandalized if you think they would have agreed.

7. You will find a modern account of Madam Knight and her journey in *Dames and Daughters of Colonial Days* by Geraldine Brooks. Read this and tell the class more about Madam Knight's trip.

8. Read Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd's *Skyward* or *Little America* and see what similarities you can discover in the adventures and personalities of William Byrd and his descendant.

### *4. The Age of Common Sense*

The Puritan strain of thought was the most important and the most articulate in seventeenth-century America, but the eighteenth century saw the steady rise of a new philosophy — reason and common sense. The Puritan, engrossed in his chances for eternal salvation, gave way to the Yankee, shrewdly studying the world about him and his chances for success this side of the grave.

**The Puritan becomes the Yankee.** One element in Puritan belief led directly to the development of the type called the Yankee. It is a part of Calvinistic faith that God's elect shall prosper in this

world as well as the next. Therefore, those who hoped they were among the elect took good care of their worldly affairs, and thrift was next to godliness as a virtue among the Puritans. As other, sterner elements of Puritanism weakened, this one grew stronger. Even before Jonathan Edwards began his ministry, Puritanism was past the crest of its power. The sons of the first Puritans had looked at the evidences of opportunity all around them — the water power and harbors of New England; the wealth of the forest; the rich, free land in the mysterious country west of the mountains — and had been unable to agree with their fathers' hard beliefs about predestination and the absence of free will. They had listened, also, to some ideas that were coming in from overseas. People over there were beginning to declare that the original sin of Adam did not condemn the whole human race to punishment. They were beginning to say that the Bible is not the only source of truth; that common sense and observation of nature are equally important. The New Englander had been thrifty and devout; he now became thrifty and practical. His question was no longer: Is it God's will? but now became: Does it work? Is it sensible? Is it useful? Common sense was the final law, the great doctrine.

Benjamin Franklin. No American worshiped common sense more successfully than did Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790). He is the typical "self-made man." In his famous *Autobiography* you may read the story of his rise, told better than any later historian could possibly tell it — how he was early apprenticed to his brother; how he ran away to Philadelphia, worked hard, got a foothold in business, and established his own printing shop; how he became printer, publisher, editor, writer, and produced America's most famous almanac; how he interested himself in all civic affairs, found at the age of forty-two that he had made enough money for a comfortable living, and retired.

It was a good thing for Philadelphia when Franklin came there to make his living. It was a good thing for America when Franklin found that he could take time from his business to become interested in the welfare of his country. You can read elsewhere all the details of his astonishing career. It will be enough here to record some of its results. Before he was fifty he was the leading citizen of Pennsylvania. By the time of the Revolution only Washington could dispute with him the title of first citizen of America. In Europe he received such a welcome and respect as possibly no other American has ever received.

But even this does not indicate how versatile the man was. He has been the subject of a volume in the American Writers Series and one in the American Statesmen Series, and — as Brander Matthews has remarked — if there were an American Scientists Series his name would be there too. He was one of the great practical scientists of his day. He invented bifocal glasses, the first practical heating stove, and lightning rods. He established the University of Pennsylvania, the Philadelphia Free Library, a workable postal system, and a paper from which the *Saturday Evening Post* claims to be descended. He was his country's only completely successful representative in Europe, and he was the only man except Washington whom all the colonies could accept as a presiding officer for the Constitutional Convention. He is the only American whose name is signed to all four of the great political documents that made the nation: the Declaration of Independence, the treaty with France, the treaty of peace with England, and the Constitution.

Franklin's writings. In 1732 Franklin began to publish an almanac — *Poor Richard's Almanac*, under the pen name of Richard Saunders. In most ways his almanac was like others — calendar, hours of sunrise and sunset, times of eclipses, and weather forecast; but in one way it was quite different. Franklin filled all the blank spaces with proverbs and pungent witticisms, things that could be pondered by the fireside on a winter evening and that would teach the reader to be thrifty and upright. *Poor Richard's Almanac* was a great success. For twenty-five years it sold ten thousand copies a year. Franklin gathered the best of the proverbs together and they have appeared in nearly two hundred editions in twenty languages. No previous work by an American was read by so many people.

The proverbs reveal Franklin's gift as a humorist and a practical philosopher. The same gifts are shown in his lighter works, but his greatest claim to fame in American literature rests on his *Autobiography*. This book was written in the last years of his life, and was never finished. It carries the story down to 1757, the year before Jonathan Edwards died and the year when Franklin was sent to represent Pennsylvania at the British court. Because Franklin was a busy man interested in a great variety of undertakings, a sociable man enjoying other people, and an observant man noticing what went on around him, the *Autobiography* presents to the reader not only Benjamin Franklin but also much of interest about contemporary American life. It is one of the few undisputed classics of American literature.

PROJECT OF ARRIVING AT MORAL  
PERFECTION

by BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790)

Franklin's *Autobiography* is a full account of his life up to 1757, portraying his weakness frankly and his strength with no false modesty. The first section, written in the form of a letter to his son, is especially direct, simple, and interesting. So varied is the picture of the author's experience that it is hard to judge the whole by any one chapter. The following one, however, shows as clearly as any part the difference between the great disciple of common sense and his Puritan forebears. Whereas the devout New Englanders of earlier generations searched the Scriptures and listened anxiously to long sermons in the attempt to discover whether they were among the chosen of God, Franklin calmly decided for himself what virtues were desirable and with the coolest practical judgment laid out a daily course of action that would develop the qualities in himself. You will enjoy testing his list with your own mind, to decide whether they are still desirable virtues and whether they can still be achieved by the procedure Franklin laid out.

IT WAS about this time I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my care was employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another; habit took the advantage of inattention; inclination was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded, at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous was not sufficient to prevent our slipping; and that the contrary habits must be broken, and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore contrived the following method.

In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I had met with in my reading, I found the catalogue more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. Temperance, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every

other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I proposed to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annexed to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occurred to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully expressed the extent I gave to its meaning.

These names of virtues, with their precepts were:

#### I. TEMPERANCE

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

#### 2. SILENCE

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

#### 3. ORDER

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

#### 4. RESOLUTION

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

#### 5. FRUGALITY

Make no expense but to do good to others or yourself; i.e., waste nothing.

#### 6. INDUSTRY

Lose no time; be always employed in something useful; cut off all unnecessary actions.

#### 7. SINCERITY

Use no hurtful deceit; think innocently and justly; and, if you speak, speak accordingly.

#### 8. JUSTICE

Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

#### 9. MODERATION

Avoid extremes; forbear resenting injuries so much as you think they deserve.

## 10. CLEANLINESS

Tolerate no uncleanness in body, clothes, or habitation.

## 11. TRANQUILLITY

Be not disturbed at trifles, or at accidents common or unavoidable.

## 12. CHASTITY

## 13. HUMILITY

Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

My intention being to acquire the *habitude* of all these virtues, I judged it would be well not to distract my attention by attempting the whole at once, but to fix it on one of them at a time; and, when I should be master of that, then to proceed to another, and so on, till I should have gone through the thirteen; and as the previous acquisition of some might facilitate the acquisition of certain others, I arranged them with that view, as they stand above. Temperance first, as it tends to procure that coolness and clearness of head, which is so necessary where constant vigilance was to be kept up, and guard maintained against the unremitting attraction of ancient habits, and the force of perpetual temptations. This being acquired and established, Silence would be more easy; and my desire being to gain knowledge at the same time that I improved in virtue, and considering that in conversation it was obtained rather by the use of the ears than of the tongue, and therefore wishing to break a habit I was getting into of prattling, punning, and joking, which only made me acceptable to trifling company, I gave Silence the second place. This and the next, Order, I expected would allow me more time for attending to my project and my studies. Resolution, once become habitual, would keep me firm in my endeavors to obtain all the subsequent virtues; Frugality and Industry freeing me from my remaining debt, and producing affluence and independence, would make more easy the practice of Sincerity and Justice, etc., etc. Conceiving then, that, agreeably to the advice of Pythagoras in his *Golden Verses*, daily examination would be necessary, I contrived the following method for conducting that examination.

I made a little book, in which I allotted a page for each of the virtues. I ruled each page with red ink, so as to have seven columns, one for each day of the week, marking each column with a letter for the day. I crossed these columns with thirteen red lines, marking



the beginning of each line with the first letter of one of the virtues, on which line, and in its proper column, I might mark, by a little black spot, every fault I found upon examination to have been committed respecting that virtue upon that day.

I determined to give a week's strict attention to each of the virtues successively. Thus, in the first week, my great guard was to avoid even the least offense against Temperance, leaving the other virtues to their ordinary chance, only marking every evening the faults of the

*Form of the Pages*

| TEMPERANCE                                      |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| EAT NOT TO DULLNESS;<br>DRINK NOT TO ELEVATION. |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
|   | S. | M. | T. | W. | T. | F. | S. |
| T.  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| S.  | *  | *  |    | *  |    | *  |    |
| O.  | ** | *  | *  |    | *  | *  | *  |
| R.  |    |    | *  |    |    | *  |    |
| F.  |    | *  |    |    | *  |    |    |
| I.  |    |    | *  |    |    |    |    |
| S.  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| J.  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| M.  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| C.  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| T.  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| C.  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| H.  |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |

day. Thus, if in the first week I could keep my first line, marked T, clear of spots, I supposed the habit of that virtue so much strengthened, and its opposite weakened, that I might venture extending my attention to include the next, and for the following week keep both lines clear of spots. Proceeding thus to the last, I could go through a course complete in thirteen weeks, and four courses in a year. And

like him who, having a garden to weed, does not attempt to eradicate all the bad herbs at once, which would exceed his reach and his strength, but works on one of the beds at a time, and, having accomplished the first, proceeds to a second, so I should have, I hoped, the encouraging pleasure of seeing on my pages the progress I made in virtue, by clearing successively my lines of their spots, till in the end, by a number of courses, I should be happy in viewing a clean book, after a thirteen weeks' daily examination. . . .

The precept of Order requiring that *every part of my business should have its allotted time*, one page in my little book contained the following scheme of employment for the twenty-four hours of a natural day.

|                                     |    |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
|-------------------------------------|----|------|---|------|---|---|---------|--|
| THE MORNING                         |    | good | { | 5    | Rise, wash, and address   |   |         |  |
| Question. What shall I do this day? |    |      |   | 6    | Powerful Goodness! Contrive day's business, and take the resolution of the day; prosecute the present study, and breakfast. |   |         |  |
|                                     |    |      |   | 7    |   |   |         |  |
|                                     |    |      |   | 8    |   |   |         |  |
|                                     |    |      |   | 9    | } Work.   |   |         |  |
|                                     |    |      |   | 10   |   |   |         |  |
|                                     |    |      |   | 11   |   |   |         |  |
|                                     |    |      |   | NOON |   | { | 12      | } Read, or overlook my accounts, and dine. |
|                                     |    |      |   |      | 1   |   |         |  |
|                                     |    |      |   |      | 2   |   | } Work. |  |
|                                     |    |      |   |      | 3   |   |         |  |
| 4                                   |    |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
| 5                                   |    |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
| EVENING                             |    | good | { | 6    | } Put things in their places. Supper. Music or diversion, or conversation. Examination of the day.                          |   |         |  |
| Question. What have I done today?   | 7  |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
|                                     | 8  |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
|                                     | 9  |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
|                                     | 10 |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
|                                     | 11 |      |   | }    | 12  |   |         |  |
|                                     | 1  |      |   |      | } Sleep.  |   |         |  |
|                                     | 2  |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
|                                     | 3  |      |   |      |   |   |         |  |
| NIGHT                               |    | {    | 4 |      |   |   |         |  |

I entered upon the execution of this plan for self-examination, and continued it with occasional intermissions for some time. I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined; but I had the satisfaction of seeing them diminish. To avoid the trouble of renewing now and then my little book, which, by scraping out the marks on the paper of old faults to make room for new ones in a new course, became full of holes, I transferred my tables and precepts to the ivory leaves of a memorandum book, on which the lines were drawn with red ink, that made a durable stain, and on those lines I marked my faults with a black lead pencil, which marks I could easily wipe out with a wet sponge. After a while I went through one course only in a year, and afterward only one in several years, till at length I omitted them entirely, being employed in voyages and business abroad, with a multiplicity of affairs that interfered; but I always carried my little book with me.

My scheme of Order gave me the most trouble; and I found that, though it might be practicable where a man's business was such as to leave him the disposition of his time, that of a journeyman printer, for instance, it was not possible to be exactly observed by a master, who must mix with the world, and often receive people of business at their own hours. Order, too, with regard to places for things, papers, etc., I found extremely difficult to acquire. I had not been early accustomed to it, and, having an exceeding good memory, I was not so sensible of the inconvenience attending want of method. This article, therefore, cost me so much painful attention, and my faults in it vexed me so much, and I made so little progress in amendment, and had such frequent relapses, that I was almost ready to give up the attempt, and content myself with a faulty character in that respect, like the man who, in buying an ax of a smith, my neighbor, desired to have the whole of its surface as bright as the edge. The smith consented to grind it bright for him if he would turn the wheel; he turned, while the smith pressed the broad face of the ax hard and heavily on the stone, which made the turning of it very fatiguing. The man came every now and then from the wheel to see how the work went on, and at length would take his ax as it was, without further grinding. "No," said the smith, "turn on, turn on; we shall have it bright by and by; as yet, it is only speckled." "Yes," says the man, "*but I think I like a speckled ax best.*" And I believe this may have been the case with many, who, having, for want of some such means as I employed, found the difficulty of obtaining good and breaking bad habits in other points of vice and virtue, have given up the struggle

and concluded that "*a speckled ax was best*"; for something, that pretended to be reason, was every now and then suggesting to me that such extreme nicety as I exacted of myself might be a kind of foppery in morals, which, if it were known, would make me ridiculous; that a perfect character might be attended with the inconvenience of being envied and hated; and that a benevolent man should allow a few faults in himself, to keep his friends in countenance.

In truth, I found myself incorrigible with respect to Order; and now I am grown old, and my memory bad, I feel very sensibly the want of it. But, on the whole, though I never arrived at the perfection I had been so ambitious of obtaining, but fell far short of it, yet I was, by the endeavor, a better and a happier man than I otherwise should have been if I had not attempted it; as those who aim at perfect writing by imitating the engraved copies, though they never reach the wished-for excellence of those copies, their hand is mended by the endeavor.

It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice, with the blessing of God, their ancestor owed the constant felicity of his life, down to his seventy-ninth year, in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence; but, if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoyed ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To Temperance he ascribes his long-continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution; to Industry and Frugality, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to Sincerity and Justice, the confidence of his country, and the honorable employs it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance. I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefit.

It will be remarked that, though my scheme was not wholly without religion, there was in it no mark of any of the distinguishing tenets of any particular sect. I had purposely avoided them; for, being fully persuaded of the utility and excellency of my method, and that it might be serviceable to people in all religions, and intending some time or other to publish it, I would not have anything in it that should prejudice anyone, of any sect, against it. I purposed writing a little

comment on each virtue, in which I would have shown the advantages of possessing it, and the mischiefs attending its opposite vice; and I should have called my book *The Art of Virtue*, because it would have shown the means and manner of obtaining virtue, which would have distinguished it from the mere exhortation to be good, that does not instruct and indicate the means, but is like the apostle's man of verbal charity, who only without showing to the naked and hungry how or where they might get clothes or victuals, exhorted them to be fed and clothed. — James 2:15, 16.

But it so happened that my intention of writing and publishing this comment was never fulfilled. I did, indeed, from time to time, put down short hints of the sentiments, reasonings, etc., to be made use of in it, some of which I have still by me; but the necessary close attention to private business in the earlier part of my life, and public business since, have occasioned my postponing it; for, it being connected in my mind with *a great and extensive project*, that required the whole man to execute, and which an unforeseen succession of employs prevented my attending to, it has hitherto remained unfinished.

In this piece it was my design to explain and enforce this doctrine, that vicious actions are not hurtful because they are forbidden, but forbidden because they are hurtful, the nature of man alone considered; that it was, therefore, everyone's interest to be virtuous who wished to be happy even in this world; and I should, from this circumstance (there being always in the world a number of rich merchants, nobility, states, and princes, who have need of honest instruments for the management of their affairs, and such being so rare), have endeavored to convince young persons that no qualities were so likely to make a poor man's fortune as those of probity and integrity.

My list of virtues contained at first but twelve; but a Quaker friend having kindly informed me that I was generally thought proud; that my pride showed itself frequently in conversation; that I was not content with being in the right when discussing any point, but was overbearing and rather insolent, of which he convinced me by mentioning several instances; I determined endeavoring to cure myself, if I could, of this vice or folly among the rest, and I added Humility to my list.

I cannot boast of much success in acquiring the *reality* of this virtue, but I had a good deal with regard to the *appearance* of it. I made it a rule to forbear all direct contradiction to the sentiments of others, and all positive assertion of my own. I even forbid myself, agreeably to the old law of our Junto,<sup>1</sup> the use of every word

<sup>1</sup> **Junto**: name of the debating society organized by Franklin.

or expression in the language that imported a fixed opinion, such as *certainly*, *undoubtedly*, etc., and I adopted, instead of them, *I conceive*, *I apprehend*, or *I imagine* a thing to be so or so; or it *so appears to me at present*. When another asserted something that I thought an error, I denied myself the pleasure of contradicting him abruptly, and of showing immediately some absurdity in his proposition; and in answering I began by observing that in certain cases or circumstances his opinion would be right, but in the present case there *appeared* or *seemed* to me some difference, etc. I soon found the advantage of this change in my manner; the conversations I engaged in went on more pleasantly. The modest way in which I proposed my opinions procured them a readier reception and less contradiction; I had less mortification when I was found to be in the wrong, and I more easily prevailed with others to give up their mistakes and join with me when I happened to be in the right.

And this mode, which I at first put on with some violence to natural inclination, became at length so easy, and so habitual to me that perhaps for these fifty years past no one has ever heard a dogmatical expression escape me. And to this habit (after my character of integrity) I think it principally owing that I had early so much weight with my fellow citizens when I proposed new institutions, or alterations in the old, and so much influence in public councils when I became a member; for I was but a bad speaker, never eloquent, subject to much hesitation in my choice of words, hardly correct in language, and yet I generally carried my points.

In reality, there is, perhaps, no one of our natural passions so hard to subdue as *pride*. Disguise it, struggle with it, beat it down, stifle it, mortify it as much as one pleases, it is still alive, and will every now and then peep out and show itself; you will see it, perhaps, often in this history; for, even if I could conceive that I had completely overcome it, I should probably be proud of my humility.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What sort of Franklin does this chapter reveal to you? Would you have liked him as a friend? Why or why not?
2. Find out from a psychology book or from your teacher some of the laws of habit formation. Did Franklin understand these? Discuss the part habit plays in our lives.
3. Do you agree with Franklin that temperance is the virtue to be first striven for? Why? Just what is meant by "temperance"?
4. Which of Franklin's virtues seems to you the hardest to attain? the

easiest? most worth while? least worth while? What is the chief defect of his virtues? Make your own list, with improvements if possible.

5. Why did humility come last on Franklin's list? How did it affect his method of carrying on an argument? How did this lesson affect his later career? Do you think his method is widely practiced? Listen to arguments about you, and collect evidence to support your answer.

6. Would the Puritans have approved Franklin's list of virtues? Why does the whole discussion clearly belong to the "Age of Common Sense" rather than to the late Puritan period?

### *For Your Vocabulary*

7. Franklin draws a nice parallel when he compares the gardener's attempt to *eradicate* (page 883) weeds to his own attempt to get rid of his faults. For *eradicate* means to get out by the roots, and so to get entirely rid of. The common word *radical* comes from the same stem, meaning root. A *radical* change is one which strikes at the very roots of an established order. Scientists are constantly at work to *eradicate* diseases and plant pests. Franklin's program to *eradicate* his faults met with one defeat. Do you remember which endeavor convinced him that he was *incorrigible* (page 885), or incapable of being corrected? One other trait, humility, he did not wholly achieve, but he acquired the appearance of humility by curing himself of making *dogmatical* (page 887) statements. Nowadays we use the simplified form *dogmatic* to describe the statement of opinions as if they were proven facts, or to describe a person who has the habit of holding his own opinions in such exaggerated regard. Do you think it is *dogmatic* to state that criminals are *incorrigible* and that it is impossible to *eradicate* crime?

## SAYINGS OF POOR RICHARD

by BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790)

In 1732 (the year of Washington's birth) Franklin began his *Poor Richard's Almanac* by playing a practical joke on his only rival almanac maker, Titus Leads, a quack astrologer. Poor Richard prophesied the death of this man the following October, in accordance with the infallible stars. When Leads protested violently, Poor Richard replied that he must be dead because the stars could not lie and no living man would use such unchristian language or publish such an unworthy almanac. This trick had been played in England some years before by Jonathan Swift, author of *Gulliver's Travels*, but most Americans did not know about that and accepted the incident as a huge joke.

The almanac continued in popularity for twenty-five years, and many

of its wise saws still live in American conversation. Franklin borrowed largely from the wisdom of the ages, but often rephrased the maxims or put them into fresh metaphors. His versions possess the neatness, the balance, and the clever contrasts which go with brevity to form the soul of wit. But these sayings illustrate more than Franklin's humor; they also reveal this great American's practical common sense, both its strength — a shrewd insight into human nature — and its weakness — a failure to emphasize spiritual and idealistic qualities.

1. Experience keeps a dear school, but a fool will learn in no other.
2. If a man empties his purse into his head, no man can take it away from him. An investment in knowledge always pays the best interest.
3. A great talker may be no fool, but he is one who relies on him.
4. Tart words make no friends; a spoonful of honey will catch more flies than a gallon of vinegar.
5. Glass, china, and reputation are easily cracked and never well mended.
6. Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise.
7. A truly great man will neither trample on a worm nor sneak to an emperor.
8. He that riseth late must trot all day, and shall scarce overtake his business at night; while laziness travels so slowly that poverty soon overtakes him. Drive thy business. Let it not drive thee.
9. A little neglect may breed mischief; for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; for want of a horse the rider was lost; for want of the rider the battle was lost.
10. If you would know the value of money, go and try to borrow some; he that goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing.
11. He that composes himself is wiser than he that composes books.
12. He that is of the opinion that money will do everything may well be suspected of doing everything for money.
13. If a man could have half his wishes, he would double his troubles.
14. Creditors have better memories than debtors.
15. Don't think to hunt two hares with one dog.
16. A lie stands on one leg, truth on two.
17. A pair of good ears will drain dry a hundred tongues.
18. A plowman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees.
19. Handle your tools without mittens; the cat in gloves catches no mice.



## 390 COLONIAL LIFE AND LITERATURE

20. Now that I have a sheep and a cow everybody bids me good morrow.

21. Silks and satins, scarlet and velvet, put out the kitchen fire.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Be sure you understand the meaning of each of these sayings. The last seven are highly figurative. For each of these seven write a sentence that gives the literal meaning.

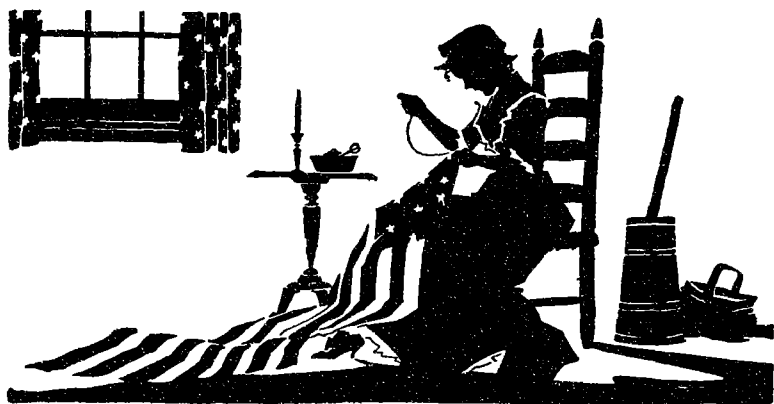
2. Make a list of all the virtues preached by these sayings, such as thrift, perseverance, and so on. What kind of virtues are emphasized? Do they properly belong to an "Age of Common Sense"? What kinds of virtues are conspicuous by their absence? Does your list verify or contradict the comment at the end of the introductory remarks?

### *For Ambitious Students*

3. Try your hand at writing some parodies on these sayings or some wise saws of your own which will apply to your school life.

### SUMMARY

The strenuous circumstances of life in colonial America did not foster much purely artistic literature. The first writings were records such as John Smith's *A True Relation* and William Bradford's *Of Plimouth Plantation*. The greatest literary activity was among the Puritans of New England and was largely connected with their religion. Their most notable productions were *The New England Primer*, *The Bay Psalm Book*, Wigglesworth's "The Day of Doom," and such sermons as Jonathan Edwards's "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." Life in later colonial times is preserved for readers in journals and diaries. Samuel Sewall recorded the day-by-day life in a New England town, Sarah Kemble Knight set down an account of early travel between Boston and New York, and William Byrd sketched life along the southern boundary line of Virginia. At the close of the colonial period the Puritan gave way to the Yankee, and common sense was the theme of the times. Benjamin Franklin is the most perfect example of the "Age of Common Sense" — as we can see in the "Sayings of Poor Richard" and his *Autobiography*, one of the great classics of American literature.



## *Chapter III*

### A NEW NATION

(1775-1800)

THE STORMY days of revolution left no more leisure for purely artistic literature than did the hard-working colonial days, but the bitterly fought issues which engrossed men's energies stimulated production of a great deal of writing related to the problems of the time.

The transformation of a number of separate British colonies, inhabited by subjects loyal to the crown, into the federated government of an independent people was a long and gradual process, beset with difficulties at every stage. First of all, the loyalty of the British colonist to the English king had to be weakened. Then the colonist had to learn to think of himself not as a New Yorker, or a Virginian, but as one of the whole group of Americans whose interests were the same. He had to be persuaded that a declaration of independence from England was the only means left of preserving the peculiar liberties that he so highly prized. He had to help fight to establish this freedom. And then, in order to protect it against the selfish impulses within himself and his neighbors, he had to set up a functioning government to control this new society. Finally, the officials elected to run this new government had to find and pursue policies that would secure the authority and financial responsibility of their new state, so as to earn the respect of the world. By solving these problems, the peerless, fearless leaders of that day brought their people safely through the Revolutionary crisis.

Thus the few plays or poems of a purely artistic nature produced during this period are far less significant to American readers than the orations, pamphlets, and other historical documents that record the birth of the new nation.

**The roots of revolution.** Historians have written many fat books about the causes of the American Revolution. But, complicated as the full story is, beneath the tangle of events and proclamations lay three essential sources of disagreement.

From the beginning England's imperial policy was to use her colonies for her own benefit. A small country, short on land and food-stuffs but advantageously placed to handle the trade of the Western world, England was a merchant country before the Industrial Revolution made her a land of factories. She needed food, she needed raw materials, and she needed markets. All three America provided. Manufactures in the colonies were rigidly restricted. So was trade. England must have all she needed of what America produced, and she must supply all that America needed from abroad. Even the right of carrying the goods to and from the colonies was reserved for the English merchant ships. So far the imperial policy might safely have continued, for the young America knew no other system. But after long and expensive wars England demanded further tribute and levied heavy taxes to raise it. From the colonies rose a steadily increasing cry of protest — "Taxation without representation is tyranny" — and England would not consider allowing the colonies either to be represented in Parliament or to take over the power of levying taxes. The celebrated Boston Tea Party was an explosion against one of these taxes — one designed to rescue the heavily indebted East India Company at the expense of American tea drinkers.

The second strong underlying cause of the Revolution was the pride and independence of the local leaders in colonial government — the influential merchants of New England and New York and the rich planters of Virginia. For more than a hundred years these rising Americans had been contesting with the royal governors for authority over local affairs. Many of the reports of the governors are long complaints of the presumption of the leading men in the colonies. The New England governors complained of the Town Meeting that passed laws opposed to the governor's will, and the Virginia governors complained of the wealthy planters who insisted on ruling their parishes as they saw fit. When opposition to British authority became crucial, there were plenty of men of independent action ready to become leaders.

The third ingredient of the Revolution was the sturdy spirit of independence in the great mass of the colonists, and particularly among the frontiersmen. Many of the settlers on the western fringe were not even English. Huguenot-French, Irish, Swedes, Germans, and Scotch-Irish — no lovers of England at all — had been pouring into the colonies. Many of the poorer English settlers had come from poverty and misery in the homeland to independence and opportunity in the new country. None of these farmers and frontiersmen felt the strong loyalty to England that influenced some of the gentry on the coast. When new taxes threatened to take from them the fruits of their endeavors, they did not hesitate to cast their lot for separation from a mother country whose policy seemed unjust.

Probably no one of these causes alone could have roused the colonies to sever the ties that bound them to England. But they developed together, and each made its own particular contribution to the conflict. Britain's imperial policy furnished issues, the colonial champions accustomed to contend with royal governors for power of home rule furnished leaders, and the hardy independence that led poor settlers into the wilderness in search of opportunity for a better life furnished troops. Together they generated enough power to make a new and independent nation of thirteen colonies.

Crèvecoeur's picture of "Americans." What sort of people were those colonists who were so mightily disturbed by overseas authority, and what kind of life did they lead? Fortunately we have an inspiring firsthand interpretation of the America of the 1770's written by a man who was widely traveled and keenly observant, one who had chosen America for his home from among many places he had seen for himself — Hector St. Jean de Crèvecoeur. To him "America" was not merely a distant outpost of England, but a land of such liberty and opportunity as Europe had never known; and "Americans" were not merely Englishmen or Dutchmen away from home, but self-dependent individuals of a type quite new in the world.

A Frenchman of cultured background, Crèvecoeur came first to Canada and then in 1759 into the English colonies, traveling all down the Atlantic seaboard before he came back and settled on a farm in New York. He took his farming seriously, introducing cover crops, such as alfalfa, to America and later in life attempting to develop potato culture in France.

Crèvecoeur pictured America as a happy asylum, but for him it became the scene of personal tragedy. During the fighting he kept aloof from both sides, and met the usual fate of a neutral: he was mistrusted

and suspected both by his revolutionary neighbors and by the British, and after a time in a British prison in New York he left his family in America and went to England. Here he arranged for the publication of his *Letters from an American Farmer*. He returned to America after the Revolution, to find that his wife was dead, his children scattered, his home burned. After a term as French consul at New York he returned in 1790 to France, where he spent the rest of his life.

## A NEW NATION

| 1690 | 1700                                   | 1750                                   | 1775                     | 1783 | 1800 |
|------|--|--|--------------------------|------|------|
|      | French and Indian Wars<br>Intermittent | 1763                                   | 1775                     | 1783 |      |
|      |  | 1765                                   | 1788                     |      |      |
|      |  | Stamp Act                              | Constitution<br>Ratified |      |      |
| 1706 | Benjamin Franklin                      | 1790                                   |                          |      |      |
|      | 1732                                   | George Washington                      | 1799                     |      |      |
|      |  |  | 1796                     |      |      |
|      |  |  | <i>Farewell Address</i>  |      |      |
| 1735 | Jean de Crèvecoeur                     | 1813                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | 1782                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | <i>Letters from an American Farmer</i> |                          |      |      |
| 1736 | Patrick Henry                          | 1799                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | 1775                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | <i>Speech in Virginia Convention</i>   |                          |      |      |
| 1737 | Francis Hopkinson                      | 1791                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | 1778                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | <i>The Battle of the Kegs</i>          |                          |      |      |
| 1737 | Thomas Paine                           | 1809                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | 1776                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | <i>Common Sense</i>                    |                          |      |      |
| 1743 | Thomas Jefferson                       | 1826                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | 1776                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | <i>Declaration of Independence</i>     |                          |      |      |
| 1757 | Alexander Hamilton                     | 1804                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | 1787                                   |                          |      |      |
|      |  | <i>The Federalist</i><br>begun         |                          |      |      |

### I. *The Literature of the Revolution*

Orators and pamphleteers. Few of the writings completed during the active conflict with England can be called "literature." Prose was almost entirely limited to letters, pamphlets, state documents, and the written record of great oratory — all centering around the disturbing issues of the day. Poetry consisted largely of satirical jibes at the British. Literature, we might say, served two great purposes just preceding and during the Revolution: first, to explain and justify America's actions to Europe; second, to unify the colonists in a common purpose and encourage them in adversity.

As early as 1761 James Otis fired what has since become known as "the first gun of the Revolution," his great speech against the Writs of Assistance. "A man's house is his castle!" cried Otis, and all the colonies took up the cry. John and Samuel Adams, in Boston, contributed hundreds of essays and letters. Franklin wrote wise little satires to warn the British government what it was doing, and warned his countrymen, on the side, that "we must all hang together or we shall hang separately" (see cartoon page 1182). In Philadelphia, John Dickinson wrote a series of *Letters from a Farmer*, attempting to prove by the British laws themselves that the British were wrong; so cool and convincing was this legal reasoning that Dickinson became known as "the penman of the Revolution." Far less cool but just as convincing was the oration of Patrick Henry, of Virginia: "Give me liberty or give me death."

You must not suppose that all the writing was in favor of revolution. Perhaps one-third of the inhabitants of America preferred reconciliation with England, and these Tories had their spokesman too. The stinging satire of Jonathan Odell was felt by more than one Revolutionist.

**Thomas Paine: greatest pamphleteer.** The most influential pen in America was not wielded by a native American at all, but by English-born Thomas Paine. Like Crèvecoeur, Paine was born in Europe; unlike Crèvecoeur, he grew up in humble estate and poverty. He thus became early convinced of the lack of economic and political justice in human affairs, and brought with him to America in 1774 an almost fanatical devotion to the cause of political and intellectual freedom. While the colonists were still undecided as to whether they wanted actual independence from the mother country, Paine struck a tremendously powerful blow for complete separation by issuing the

famous pamphlet called *Common Sense* in January, 1776. It was one of the important influences that led to the Declaration of Independence six months later.

The severe and prolonged struggle on the battlefield at times brought profound discouragement and uncertainty; then Tom Paine became a sort of savior of the American cause. In December, 1776, Washington was forced to retreat across New Jersey. It seemed the end. Even Washington had written, on December 18: "Between you and me, I think our affairs are in a very bad situation. . . . If every nerve is not strained to the utmost to recruit the new army with all possible expedition, I think the game is pretty near up." Next day the first copies of Paine's pamphlet *The Crisis* were in the hands of Americans. "These are the times that try men's souls," it began. "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country." The words were like whips. Washington had the pamphlet read in every regiment. Regularly throughout the rest of the war *The Crisis* was printed and distributed, and it led Americans like a vision.

Wherever a revolution was likely to break out, there was Paine. In England he wrote *The Rights of Man*, and was arraigned for treason. In France, during the Revolution, he wrote *The Age of Reason* — half of it in prison. (His reputation for atheism, resulting from this pamphlet, was undeserved.) Constantly working for economic and social justice, he failed to achieve a happy life for himself. Returning to America, he died in poverty, a social outcast; but now we honor him as a great American hero and one of the world's great idealists.

**The Declaration of Independence.** When the effect of Tom Paine's *Common Sense* reached the Second Continental Congress, Richard Henry Lee rose, June 7, 1776, to move that the United Colonies, already at war for many months, "are, and of right ought to be, free and independent states." It was only natural that the committee, then appointed to draft a declaration of independence, should let Thomas Jefferson do the actual writing, for he was already known for his pamphlet *A Summary View of the Rights of British America* (1774). With the adoption of this declaration the American Revolution ceased to be a rebellion and became a war for independence.

**Songs and ballads of the Revolution.** While Jefferson and his colleagues were considering the wording of the Declaration of Independence, Washington and the troops were struggling brilliantly to make good that declaration in the field. But the soldiers' pay was pitifully small; the equipment was woefully inadequate; and most of

the men were pioneer farmers, who knew they must either get back to look after their farms or let their families starve. The persuasion of logic and rhetoric so skillfully employed by Tom Paine in *The Crisis* served mightily to bolster the flagging spirits of the troops. So did the war songs; for the Revolution, like every other war, had its camp and marching songs. The most famous of these is "Yankee Doodle."

While the soldiers who met the enemy with bayonet and bullet sang popular songs of uncertain origin, the literary men of the day wrote satirical tales in verse to discomfit the enemy. Among these one of the most popular was "The Battle of the Kegs" by Francis Hopkinson, a Philadelphia lawyer who signed the Declaration of Independence and helped to draft the Articles of Confederation.

## 2. *The Literature of Nation Building*

Orators and pamphleteers induced the colonists to declare themselves independent; Washington and the troops earned the right to freedom on the field of battle. But even a victorious war does not establish liberty. Men have to discipline themselves sufficiently to live in harmony with one another, and they must set up a machinery of government which will help to assure this condition of life. Some of the greatest of American political writing came out of the debates over the Constitution. That was a critical period for America. Put yourself in the place of those men who were making the Constitution. They had to decide just what kind of government would be best for America. They had to provide not only for the America of their own times but for the vastly expanded America that was bound to come in the future. They had to make laws that would last for centuries, that would allow the country to develop fully, and that would still safeguard the rights of the people. They had to establish principles that were so fundamental and unchallengeable that today even the President and the Congress dare not pass a law or perform an act if they think it is "unconstitutional."

Then after the formulation of a constitution, constant interpretation of its principles was needed while the young nation felt its way among many pitfalls. It is sometimes hard for us to realize today how much of an experiment this republican form of government was in the eighteenth century. No wonder that up to 1800 the literature of government and political relations far outweighed in importance other types of literature. During this postwar period we find three outstanding names: Jefferson, Hamilton, and Washington.



**Thomas Jefferson: advocate of democracy.** Though the Declaration of Independence is usually thought of as Jefferson's chief contribution to American literature, we must not forget that his permanent influence on American thinking came from his letters and papers written during the formative years of the young nation. His insistence upon the value of the individual, even the humblest, has colored much of our later literature, especially that of the present century.

After playing an active part in the stirring events of the American Revolution, Jefferson became in rapid succession Governor of Virginia, member of the Continental Congress, Minister to France, our first Secretary of State, and the third President of the United States. In France, Jefferson's contact with the principles of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity," which were crystallizing into the French Revolution, confirmed his faith in democracy and the common man, and this became for him practically a religion.

The importance of this trust in the people will be clearer if we remember the chief political issue of the day: whether power should be centralized or distributed. Suppose you belong to a large club. Do you want a few officers to determine the policies of the club, or do you want every member to vote on the policies and help to suggest them? That was the problem. Shall a few leaders run the government, or shall the voice of the common people run it? Jefferson said, "I am not one of those who fear the people," and came out for democracy.

**Alexander Hamilton: *The Federalist*.** The leader of the opposing view was Alexander Hamilton. He believed that the common people could not always be trusted to govern themselves wisely and that power should, therefore, be concentrated in the hands of those who had property and education. In the convention which met in 1787 to form the Constitution of the United States, Hamilton took a leading part. There was long and acrimonious debate. If Jefferson had not been away in France as Ambassador, the disputes might have been even sharper. When the compromise document was finally drawn up, the delegates went home to persuade their respective states to accept this constitution for a federal union.

Having played a decisive part in the framing of the Constitution, Hamilton afterward employed all the force of his eloquence and personality to secure its acceptance by the states. He joined Madison and Jay in writing a series of eighty-five papers, called *The Federalist*, to bring about ratification. These papers, of which Hamilton wrote

at least fifty-one, are said to be unequaled by any other American work on political theory.

Hamilton's entire career was a brilliant one. At seventeen he was writing learned pamphlets defending America's policies toward England. During the war his genius for organization won for him a lieutenant-colonelcy on Washington's staff. Perhaps his greatest service was his work as our first Secretary of the Treasury, under President Washington. His life ended sensationally in a duel with Aaron Burr, then Vice-President of the United States.

**George Washington: the "Farewell Address."** "In the travail of war and revolution, America had brought forth a man to be ranked with the greatest and noblest of any age in all the world," says the American historian James Truslow Adams. "[Washington] by sheer force of character held a divided and disorganized country together until victory was achieved, and after peace was won, still held his disunited countrymen by their love and respect and admiration for himself until a nation was welded into enduring strength and unity."

In the fall of 1796 Washington decided that the state of America, external as well as internal, justified him in returning to that retirement from which he had been reluctantly drawn to assume the presidency. To notify his fellow citizens of his resolution not to be a candidate for a third term, he published in a Philadelphia newspaper the famous document now known as "Washington's Farewell Address." It is said that no other state paper has been so frequently reprinted as this so-called address. Small wonder it is that the parting advice of one who had been the pre-eminent leader of military, economic, and political struggle should be sought again and again as successive questions of policy have arisen. As Washington himself says, this address is like the "counsels of an old and affectionate friend."

These three men contributed three vital ingredients to that intangible thing we call the American spirit: Jefferson, the value of appreciating common humanity; Hamilton, the value of recognizing high intelligence and innate quality; Washington, the value of using poise and judgment to keep a balance between the two extremes.

#### S U M M A R Y

Literature served the Revolution by putting America's argument before Europe and by unifying and encouraging the Americans. Out of the intense excitement of this period have survived the stirring ora-

tions of Patrick Henry and James Otis and the flaming pamphlets of Thomas Paine; many songs and ballads, of which "Yankee Doodle" is the most famous; Jefferson's Declaration of Independence, Hamilton's great political treatise *The Federalist*, and "Washington's Farewell Address."

America came out of the Revolution with a reputation for political writing such as no other part of its literature enjoyed. The Declaration of Independence, the *Federalist* papers, and many essays, orations, and pamphlets rank with any political writings in the world. Chatham told the British House of Lords:

When your Lordships look at the papers transmitted to us from America; when you consider their decency, firmness, and wisdom, you cannot but respect their cause and wish to make it your own. For solidarity of reasoning, force of sagacity, and wisdom of conclusion, under such a complication of difficult circumstances, no nation or body of men can stand in preference to the general congress at Philadelphia.

## WHAT IS AN AMERICAN?

by JEAN DE CRÈVECŒUR (1735-1813)

Although Crèvecoeur's *Letters from an American Farmer* was published in London in 1782, it is quite properly a part of American literature and furnishes the most illuminating picture we have of America just before the Revolution. Reading the selection printed here, you can see for yourself how early America differed from Europe and what devotion it inspired. Perhaps Crèvecoeur's admiration for this country can even make you understand why he would have no part in the Revolution: he thought America already so much happier than any country in Europe that unnecessary strife was bitter folly.

I WISH I could be acquainted with the feelings and thoughts which must agitate the heart and present themselves to the mind of an enlightened Englishman, when he first lands on this continent. He must greatly rejoice that he lived at a time to see this fair country discovered and settled; he must necessarily feel a share of national pride, when he views the chain of settlements which embellishes these extended shores. When he says to himself, this is the work of my countrymen, who, when convulsed by factions, afflicted by a variety of miseries and wants, restless and impatient, took refuge here.

They brought along with them their national genius, to which they principally owe what liberty they enjoy, and what substance they possess. Here he sees the industry of his native country, displayed in a new manner, and traces in their works the embryos of all the arts, sciences, and ingenuity which flourish in Europe. Here he beholds fair cities, substantial villages, extensive fields, an immense country filled with decent houses, good roads, orchards, meadows, and bridges, where an hundred years ago all was wild, woody, and uncultivated!

What a train of pleasing ideas this fair spectacle must suggest! it is a prospect which must inspire a good citizen with the most heart-felt pleasure. The difficulty consists in the manner of viewing so extensive a scene. He is arrived on a new continent; a modern society offers itself to his contemplation, different from what he had hitherto seen. It is not composed, as in Europe, of great lords who possess everything, and of a herd of people who have nothing. Here are no aristocratical families, no courts, no kings, no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion,<sup>1</sup> no invisible power giving to a few a very visible one; no great manufacturers employing thousands, no great refinements of luxury. The rich and the poor are not so far removed from each other as they are in Europe.

Some few towns excepted, we are all tillers of the earth, from Nova Scotia to West Florida. We are a people of cultivators, scattered over an immense territory, communicating with each other by means of good roads and navigable rivers, united by the silken bands of mild government, all respecting the laws without dreading their power, because they are equitable. We are all animated with the spirit of industry, which is unfettered and unrestrained, because each person works for himself. If he travels through our rural districts he views not the hostile castle, and the haughty mansion, contrasted with the clay-built and miserable cabin, where cattle and men help to keep each other warm, and dwell in meanness, smoke, and indigence. A pleasing uniformity of decent competence appears throughout our habitations. The meanest of our log houses is a dry and comfortable habitation. Lawyer or merchant are the fairest titles our towns afford; that of a farmer is the only appellation of the rural inhabitants of our country. It must take some time ere he can reconcile himself to our dictionary, which is but short in words of dignity, and names of honor. There, on a Sunday, he sees a congregation of respectable

<sup>1</sup> no bishops, no ecclesiastical dominion: The American colonists had repudiated the European system of a state-established church.

farmers and their wives, all clad in neat homespun, well mounted, or riding in their own humble wagons. There is not among them an esquire, saving the unlettered magistrate. There he sees a parson as simple as his flock, a farmer who does not riot on the labor of others. We have no princes, for whom we toil, starve, and bleed: we are the most perfect society now existing in the world. Here man is free as he ought to be; nor is this pleasing equality so transitory as many others are. Many ages will not see the shores of our great lakes replenished with inland nations, nor the unknown bounds of North America entirely peopled. Who can tell how far it extends? Who can tell the millions of men whom it will feed and contain? for no European foot has as yet traveled half the extent of this mighty continent!

The next wish of the traveler will be to know whence came all these people? They are a mixture of English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes. From this promiscuous breed, that race now called Americans have arisen. The eastern provinces<sup>1</sup> must indeed be excepted, as being unmixed descendants of Englishmen. I have heard many wish that they had been more intermixed also: for my part, I am no wisher; and think it much better as it has happened. They exhibit a most conspicuous figure in this great and variegated picture; they too enter for a great share in the pleasing perspective displayed in these thirteen provinces. I know it is fashionable to reflect on them; but I respect them for what they have done; for the accuracy and wisdom with which they have settled their territory; for the decency of their manners; for their early love of letters; their ancient college;<sup>2</sup> the first in this hemisphere; for their industry, which to me who am but a farmer, is the criterion of everything. There never was a people, situated as they are, who with so ungrateful a soil, have done more in so short a time. Do you think that the monarchical ingredients which are more prevalent in other governments, have purged them from all foul stains? Their histories assert the contrary.

In this great American asylum, the poor of Europe have by some means met together, and in consequence of various causes; to what purpose should they ask one another what countrymen they are? Alas, two-thirds of them had no country. Can a wretch who wanders about, who works and starves, whose life is a continual scene of sore affliction or pinching penury; can that man call England or any other

<sup>1</sup> eastern provinces: "New Hampshire, Massachuset[t]s, Rhode-Island, Connecticut." (Note by Crèvecoeur.) <sup>2</sup> ancient college: Harvard College, founded 1636, opened 1640.

kingdom his country? A country that had no bread for him, whose fields procured him no harvest, who met with nothing but the frowns of the rich, the severity of the laws, with jails and punishments; who owned not a single foot of the extensive surface of this planet? No! urged by a variety of motives, here they came. Everything has tended to regenerate them; new laws, a new mode of living, a new social system; here they are become men: in Europe they were as so many useless plants, wanting vegetative mold, and refreshing showers; they whispered, and were mowed down by want, hunger, and war; but now, by the power of transplantation, like all other plants, they have taken root and flourished! Formerly they were not numbered in any civil list of their country, except in those of the poor; here they rank as citizens. By what invisible power has this surprising metamorphosis been performed? By that of the laws and that of their industry. The laws, the indulgent laws, protect them as they arrive, stamping on them the symbol of adoption; they receive ample rewards for their labors; these accumulated rewards procure them lands; those lands confer on them the title of freemen; and to that title every benefit is affixed which men can possibly require. This is the great operation daily performed by our laws. From whence proceed these laws? From our government. Whence the government? It is derived from the original genius and strong desire of the people, ratified and confirmed by government. This is the great chain which links us all, this is the picture which every province exhibits, Nova Scotia<sup>1</sup> excepted. There the crown has done all; either there were no people who had genius, or it was not much attended to: the consequence is, that the province is very thinly inhabited indeed; the power of the crown, in conjunction with the mosquitoes, has prevented men from settling there. Yet some parts of it flourished once, and it contained a mild harmless set of people.<sup>2</sup> But for the fault of a few leaders, the whole were banished. The greatest political error the crown ever committed in America, was to cut off men from a country which wanted nothing but men!

What attachment can a poor European emigrant have for a country where he had nothing? The knowledge of the language, the love of a few kindred as poor as himself, were the only cords that tied him: his country is now that which gives him land, bread, protection,

<sup>1</sup> **Nova Scotia**: ruled by military governors from its cession to England in 1713 to 1749; then granted a general assembly, but public indifference delayed its meeting for nine years. <sup>2</sup> **harmless set of people**: the Acadians. Their banishment is the subject of Longfellow's *Evangeline*.

and consequence: *Ubi panis ibi patria*,<sup>1</sup> is the motto of all emigrants. What then is the American, this new man? He is either an European, or the descendant of an European; hence that strange mixture of blood, which you will find in no other country. I could point out to you a family whose grandfather was an Englishman, whose wife was Dutch, whose son married a French woman, and whose present four sons have now four wives of different nations. He is an American, who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds. He becomes an American by being received in the broad lap of our great *Alma Mater*.<sup>2</sup> Here individuals of all nations are melting into a new race of men, whose labors and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world. Americans are the western pilgrims, who are carrying along with them that great mass of arts, sciences, vigor, and industry, which began long since in the east; they will finish the great circle. The Americans were once scattered all over Europe; here they are incorporated into one of the finest systems of population which has ever appeared, and which will hereafter become distinct by the power of the different climates they inhabit. The American ought therefore to love this country much better than that wherein either he or his forefathers were born. Here the rewards of his industry follow with equal steps the progress of his labor; his labor is founded on the basis of nature, *self-interest*; can it want a stronger allurement? Wives and children, who before in vain demanded of him a morsel of bread, now, fat and frolicsome, gladly help their father to clear those fields whence exuberant crops are to arise to feed and to clothe them all; without any part being claimed, either by a despotic prince, a rich abbot, or a mighty lord. Here religion demands but little of him; a small voluntary salary to the minister, and gratitude to God; can he refuse these? The American is a new man, who acts upon new principles; he must therefore entertain new ideas, and form new opinions. From involuntary idleness, servile dependence, penury, and useless labor, he has passed to toils of a very different nature, rewarded by ample subsistence. — This is an American.

<sup>1</sup> *Ubi panis ibi patria*: Wherever bread is, there is my country. <sup>2</sup> *Alma Mater*: cherishing mother, phrase originally applied to Venus, here to the nation, but to-day most commonly to the college one has attended.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What idea of conditions in Europe during the eighteenth century do you get from this essay? What in this picture of America would not be true today?
2. What is your opinion of the claims often made by political factions that their way is the "American way," that theirs are true "American" principles, and that they are the real upholders of "Americanism"? What is the danger of such assumptions? Why are they usually unwarranted?
3. Do you think Crèvecoeur foresaw the Revolution? What is your evidence? Which of the causes of revolution set forth on pages 892-93 are demonstrated in this selection?

*For Ambitious Students*

4. Read Israel Zangwill's *The Melting Pot*, Mary Antin's *The Promised Land*, and Kaufman and Hart's *The American Way* for other presentations of the meaning of America to the European immigrant. What do you think it means to such people today? What other books presenting the point of view of the immigrant do you know?
5. Prepare a three-minute radio talk on "What It Means to Be an American Today."

## SPEECH IN THE VIRGINIA CONVENTION

*by* PATRICK HENRY (1736-1799)

Famed among the brilliant galaxy of orators who urged armed resistance to the tyranny of George III was Patrick Henry of Virginia.

Knowing well the history of fifteen years of protest against the selfishness and stupidity of British colonial policy, Patrick Henry was convinced that the colonists must resort to armed resistance. On March 23, 1775, he delivered the following speech before the Virginia House of Burgesses. This body had reassembled after being dissolved by the royal governor, and a resolution had been proposed that "Virginia be immediately put into a posture of defense." Against strong and influential opposition (the rich planters feared a popular uprising), Patrick Henry's impassioned appeal so moved the burgesses that the resolution was passed and rebellion became a reality.

Patrick Henry was a six-footer, raw-boned and slightly stoop-shouldered. With his firm jaw, flashing blue eyes, and force of personality, he was a worthy predecessor of Daniel Webster and well deserved the eminence he



won as lawyer, as Governor of Virginia, and as a power in the Virginia legislature.

MR. PRESIDENT: —

No man thinks more highly than I do of the patriotism, as well as abilities, of the very worthy gentlemen who have just addressed the house. But different men often see the same subject in different lights; and, therefore, I hope it will not be thought disrespectful to those gentlemen, if, entertaining as I do opinions of a character very opposite to theirs, I shall speak forth my sentiments freely, and without reserve. This is no time for ceremony. The question before the house is one of awful moment to this country. For my own part, I consider it as nothing less than a question of freedom or slavery. And in proportion to the magnitude of the subject ought to be the freedom of the debate. It is only in this way that we can hope to arrive at truth, and fulfill the great responsibility which we hold to God and our country. Should I keep back my opinions at such a time, through fear of giving offense, I should consider myself as guilty of treason toward my country, and of an act of disloyalty toward the Majesty of Heaven, which I revere above all earthly kings.

Mr. President, it is natural to man to indulge in the illusions of hope. We are apt to shut our eyes against a painful truth, and listen to the song of that siren till she transforms us into beasts. Is this the part of wise men, engaged in a great and arduous struggle for liberty? Are we disposed to be of the number of those who having eyes see not, and having ears hear not, the things which so nearly concern their temporal salvation? For my part, whatever anguish of spirit it may cost, I am willing to know the whole truth; to know the worst and to provide for it.

I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past. And judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the British ministry for the last ten years, to justify those hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the house? Is it that insidious smile with which our petition has been lately received? Trust it not, sir: it will prove a snare to your feet. Suffer not yourselves to be betrayed with a kiss. Ask yourselves how this gracious reception of our petition comports with those warlike preparations which cover our waters and darken our land. Are fleets and armies necessary to a work of love and reconciliation? Have we shown ourselves so unwilling to be

reconciled that force must be called in to win back our love? Let us not deceive ourselves, sir. These are the implements of war and subjugation — the last arguments to which kings resort. I ask gentlemen, sir, what means this martial array, if its purpose be not to force us to submission? Can gentlemen assign any other possible motive for it? Has Great Britain any enemy in this quarter of the world, to call for all this accumulation of navies and armies? No, sir, she has none. They are meant for us: they can be meant for no other. They are sent over to bind and rivet upon us those chains which the British ministry have been so long forging. And what have we to oppose to them? Shall we try argument? Sir, we have been trying that for the last ten years. Have we anything new to offer upon the subject? Nothing. We have held the subject up in every light of which it is capable; but it has been all in vain. Shall we resort to entreaty and humble supplication? What terms shall we find which have not been already exhausted? Let us not, I beseech you, sir, deceive ourselves longer.

Sir, we have done everything that could be done to avert the storm which is now coming on. We have petitioned; we have remonstrated; we have supplicated; we have prostrated ourselves before the throne, and have implored its interposition to arrest the tyrannical hands of the ministry and Parliament. Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced additional violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded; and we have been spurned with contempt from the foot of the throne! In vain, after these things, may we indulge the fond hope of peace and reconciliation. There is no longer any room for hope. If we wish to be free, if we mean to preserve inviolate those inestimable privileges for which we have been so long contending, if we mean not basely to abandon the noble struggle in which we have been so long engaged, and which we have pledged ourselves never to abandon until the glorious object of our contest shall be obtained — we must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!

They tell us, sir, that we are weak — unable to cope with so formidable an adversary. But when shall we be stronger? Will it be the next week, or the next year? Will it be when we are totally disarmed, and when a British guard shall be stationed in every house? Shall we gather strength by irresolution and inaction? Shall we acquire the means of effectual resistance by lying supinely on our backs, and hugging the delusive phantom of hope until our enemies shall

have bound us hand and foot? Sir, we are not weak, if we make a proper use of those means which the God of nature hath placed in our power. Three millions of people, armed in the holy cause of liberty, and in such a country as that which we possess, are invincible by any force which our enemy can send against us. Besides, sir, we shall not fight our battles alone. There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations, and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us. The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Besides, sir, we have no election. If we were base enough to desire it, it is now too late to retire from the contest. There is no retreat but in submission and slavery! Our chains are forged! their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston! The war is inevitable — and let it come! I repeat it, sir, let it come!

It is in vain, sir, to extenuate the matter. Gentlemen may cry, Peace, Peace — but there is no peace. The war is actually begun! The next gale that sweeps from the north will bring to our ears the clash of resounding arms! Our brethren are already in the field! Why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. The best way to study this speech is to practice reading it aloud, reproducing as far as you are able the spirit in which it was originally delivered. Be careful to avoid an exaggeration which becomes mere ranting. It would be interesting for the class to elect one member to deliver the speech before the class, preliminary to discussion of it. Another entertaining plan is to dramatize the Virginia Convention with students assigned to prepare speeches of reluctant burgesses, to whom Patrick Henry may reply, concluding with a vote on the resolution. Let the objectors not forget to mention the usual internal results of revolution.

2. Some of the rhetorical devices with which this speech abounds are repetition, the question and the exclamation, the balanced sentence, the figure of speech, and the climax. Can you find good examples of all of them? There are several touches of Biblical language which are also interesting to look for.

3. John Randolph said of Patrick Henry that he was Shakespeare and Garrick combined. What did he mean by this?

4. Washington offered Patrick Henry appointments as Secretary of State and as Chief Justice, both of which he refused. Was he qualified for these positions?

### *For Your Vocabulary*

5. Many of our words for abstract ideas have developed from other words with more definite meanings which are symbolical of the abstract ideas. Patrick Henry, in trying to stir his associates into active resistance, uses two which are almost taunts. *Supplication* (page 907), an attitude of humble entreaty, means bending under and is associated with kneeling in entreaty, not a position very acceptable to the proud burgesses of Virginia. The orator reminds them that they have already *supplicated* (page 907) the throne in vain attempts to gain redress for their wrongs. Then he asks whether they will gain strength for resistance by "lying *supinely* on our backs" (page 907). Here he repeats to emphasize his point, for *supine* means literally lying on one's back, and therefore abjectly submissive.

## COMMON SENSE

### Thoughts on the Present State of American Affairs

by THOMAS PAINE (1737-1809)

Patrick Henry, the orator, successfully urged resistance to tyranny; but it was Thomas Paine, greatest of our pamphleteers, who persuaded our forefathers that they could no longer be at the same time Americans and English subjects.

The following selection is from *Common Sense*, Paine's most famous and most influential pamphlet, in which he set forth his reasons for believing that the colonies should declare their independence from the British crown. The effect of his arguments was immediate; *Common Sense* appealed convincingly to common-sense rebels. More than one hundred thousand copies were sold in less than three months, and six months after its appearance the Declaration of Independence was signed at Philadelphia

IN THE following pages I offer nothing more than simple facts, plain arguments, and common sense; and have no other preliminaries to settle with the reader, than that he will divest himself of prejudice and prepossession, and suffer his reason and his feelings to determine for themselves; that he will put on, or rather that he will not put off

the true character of a man, and generously enlarge his views beyond the present day.

Volumes have been written on the subject of the struggle between England and America. Men of all ranks have embarked in the controversy, from different motives, and with various designs: but all have been ineffectual, and the period of debate is closed. Arms, as the last resource, must decide the contest; the appeal was the choice of the King, and the continent hath accepted the challenge.

By referring the matter from argument to arms, a new area for politics is struck; a new method of thinking hath arisen. All plans, proposals, etc., prior to the nineteenth of April, i.e., to the commencement of hostilities, are like the almanacs of last year; which, though proper then, are superseded and useless now. Whatever was advanced by the advocates on either side of the question then, terminated in one and the same point, viz., a union with Great Britain; the only difference between the parties was the method of effecting it; the one proposing force, the other friendship; but it hath so far happened that the first has failed, and the second has withdrawn her influence.

As much hath been said of the advantages of reconciliation, which, like an agreeable dream, hath passed away and left us as we were, it is but right that we should examine the contrary side of the argument, and inquire into some of the many material injuries which these colonies sustain, and always will sustain, by being connected with and dependent on Great Britain. To examine that connection and dependence, on the principles of nature and common sense, to see what we have to trust to, if separated, and what we are to expect, if dependent.

I have heard it asserted by some, that as America has flourished under her former connection with Great Britain, the same connection is necessary toward her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had anything to do with her. The articles of commerce by which she has enriched herself, are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe.

But she has protected us, say some. That she hath engrossed us

is true, and defended the continent at our expense as well as her own, is admitted, and she would have defended Turkey from the same motives, viz., for the sake of trade and dominion.

Alas! we have been long led away by ancient prejudices, and made large sacrifices to superstition. We have boasted the protection of Great Britain, without considering that her motive was interest not attachment; and that she did not protect us from our enemies on our account, but from her enemies on her own account, from those who had no quarrel with us on any other account, and who will always be our enemies on the same account. Let Britain waive her pretensions to the continent, or the continent throw off the dependence, and we should be at peace with France and Spain, were they at war with Britain.

But Britain is the parent country, say some. Then the more shame upon her conduct. Even brutes do not devour their young, nor savages make war upon their families; wherefore, the assertion, if true, turns to her reproach; but it happens not to be true, or only partly so, and the phrase parent or mother country hath been adopted by the King and his parasites, with a low design of gaining an unfair bias on the credulous weakness of our minds. Europe, and not England, is the parent country of America. This new world hath been the asylum for the persecuted lovers of civil and religious liberty from every part of Europe. Hither have they fled, not from the tender embraces of the mother, but from the cruelty of the monster; and it is so far true of England, that the same tyranny which drove the first emigrants from home, pursues their descendants still.

In this extensive quarter of the globe, we forget the narrow limits of three hundred and sixty miles (the extent of England) and carry our friendship on a larger scale; we claim brotherhood with every European Christian, and triumph in the generosity of the sentiment. Wherefore, I reprobate the phrase of parent or mother country applied to England only, as being false, selfish, narrow, and ungenerous.

But, admitting that we were all of English descent, what does it amount to? Nothing. Britain, being now an open enemy, extinguishes every other name and title: and to say that reconciliation is our duty, is truly farcical. The first King of England of the present line (William the Conqueror) was a Frenchman, and half the peers of England are descendants from the same country; wherefore, by the same method of reasoning, England ought to be governed by France.

Much hath been said of the united strength of Britain and the

colonies, that in conjunction they might bid defiance to the world. But this is mere presumption; the fate of war is uncertain, neither do the expressions mean anything; for this continent would never suffer itself to be drained of inhabitants, to support the British arms in either Asia, Africa, or Europe.

Besides, what have we to do with setting the world at defiance? Our plan is commerce, and that, well attended to, will secure us the peace and friendship of all Europe; because it is the interest of all Europe to have America a free port. Her trade will always be a protection, and her barrenness of gold and silver secure her from invaders.

I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation, to show a single advantage that this continent can reap, by being connected with Great Britain. I repeat the challenge; not a single advantage is derived. Our corn will fetch its price in any market in Europe, and our imported goods must be paid for, buy them where we will.

But the injuries and disadvantages which we sustain by that connection, are without number; and our duty to mankind at large, as well as to ourselves, instructs us to renounce the alliance; because any submission to or dependence on Great Britain tends directly to involve this continent in European wars and quarrels; and sets us at variance with nations, who would otherwise seek our friendship, and against whom we have neither anger nor complaint. As Europe is our market for trade, we ought to form no partial connection with any part of it. It is the true interest of America to steer clear of European contentions, which she never can do, while, by her dependence on Britain, she is made the makeweight in the scale of British politics.

Europe is too thickly planted with kingdoms to be long at peace, and whenever a war breaks out between England and any foreign power, the trade of America goes to ruin, because of her connection with Britain. The next war may not turn out like the last, and should it not, the advocates for reconciliation now will be wishing for separation then, because neutrality, in that case, would be a safer convoy than a man-of-war. Everything that is right or natural pleads for separation. The blood of the slain, the weeping voice of nature cries, " 'Tis time to part." Even the distance at which the Almighty hath placed England and America, is a strong and natural proof that the authority of the one over the other was never the design of Heaven.

As to government matters, it is not in the power of Britain to do this continent justice: the business of it will soon be too weighty and

intricate to be managed with any tolerable degree of convenience by a power so distant from us, and so very ignorant of us; for if they cannot conquer us, they cannot govern us. To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which, when obtained, requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness — there was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.

Small islands, not capable of protecting themselves, are the proper objects for kingdoms to take under their care; but there is something absurd in supposing a continent to be perpetually governed by an island. In no instance hath nature made the satellite larger than its primary planet; and as England and America, with respect to each other, reverse the common order of nature, it is evident that they belong to different systems: England to Europe — America to itself.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Make a list of Thomas Paine's arguments for independence. Which ones seem most significant to you?
2. Remembering Thomas Paine's arguments, discuss the status of Canada and of the United States in world affairs today.
3. Which of Thomas Paine's arguments could a Filipino use in demanding independence from the United States? Which ones could an East Indian use in demanding independence from England?
4. What has been contributed to American culture by the English? the Irish? the Germans? the Italians? other nations?
5. A formula for outlining the affirmative side of a debate proposing some specific change is as follows:
  - I. Present conditions are bad and require some remedy.
  - II. The proposed change will do away with the existing evils.
  - III. The proposed change will not introduce new evils.
  - IV. There is no better way to remedy the existing evils.By what specific arguments did Thomas Paine meet each of the requirements of this formula?

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

6. Paine gives us several clear examples of *fallacious* argument (page 910), deceptive or faulty reasoning. Such an argument or belief is called a *fallacy*. The stem, meaning to deceive or to fail, gives us our common words fail, fault, and false. Do you remember "Father"'s *infallible* watch (page 265)? It was incapable of error or failure.



## THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

*by* THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826)

In June, 1776, a committee of the Second Continental Congress, consisting of Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Roger Sherman, and Robert R. Livingston was appointed to draft a declaration of independence. At the request of this committee Thomas Jefferson wrote the text, which, after a few changes by the committee, was presented to Congress on June 28. After several days of debate the Declaration of Independence was formally adopted on July 4, 1776. This document is remarkable for the clarity, dignity, and beauty of its language.

Thomas Jefferson showed this same gift for phraseology in all the state papers for which he was responsible, but the drafting of the Declaration of Independence remains the climax of Jefferson's career. It is interesting to note that both he and John Adams, our second President, died on July 4, 1826, exactly fifty years after the signing of this historic document.

For his own tomb Jefferson wrote this epitaph:

HERE WAS BURIED  
THOMAS JEFFERSON  
AUTHOR OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE,  
OF THE STATUTE OF VIRGINIA FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM,  
AND FATHER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

These were the three contributions that Jefferson valued most — political freedom for America, religious freedom for his state, and intellectual freedom for the natural aristocracy who would seek it.

WHEN IN the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles,

and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these states. To prove this let facts be submitted to a candid world.

[Here are listed the many injustices suffered by the colonies.]

In every stage of these oppressions we have petitioned for redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated petitions have been answered only by repeated injuries.

A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have we been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations which would inevitably interrupt our connection and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity which denounces our separation and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these United Colonies are and of right ought to be free and independent states; that they are absolved from all allegiance

to the British crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do.

And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What oft-quoted phrases do you find here? In the popular mind the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States are sometimes confused. Do you find any phrases here which you had supposed were in the Constitution?

2. Is it true that all men are created entirely equal? In what sense did the writers of this document mean "equal"?

3. What part of this document might the Southern states have quoted to justify their secession from the Union?

4. What attitude is shown toward the British people?

5. Vocabulary: inalienable, usurpations, unwarrantable, jurisdiction, magnanimity, acquiesce.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

6. In justifying the colonies for separating themselves from England, Jefferson says that England ignored the ties of *consanguinity* (page 915), blood kinship. In the sketch of George Washington's character (see page 928) he praises Washington for never being influenced in his decisions by *consanguinity*. Explain how the same trait could be a fault in one case and a virtue in another. Two other words developed from the same stem, meaning "blood," have decidedly different meanings, although they look much alike. A *sanguine* person was originally one with abundant, actively circulating blood, and later came to mean one of a cheerful, hopeful disposition. But *sanguinary* means bloody in the most literal sense, as a battle is bloody.

### *For Ambitious Students*

7. You might enjoy reading parts of Jefferson's *Autobiography*.

8. Try your hand at a resolution declaring for safe driving, better English, or some phase of good citizenship in the school. Try to make your language as definite and as impressive as Jefferson's.

## THE BATTLE OF THE KEGS

*by* FRANCIS HOPKINSON (1737-1791)

Hopkinson's own note to this poem says: "The ballad was occasioned by a real incident. Certain machines, in the form of kegs, charged with gunpowder, were sent down the river to annoy the British shipping then at Philadelphia. The danger of these machines being discovered, the British manned the wharfs and shipping, and discharged their small arms and cannons at everything they saw floating in the river during the ebb tide."

Gallants, attend, and hear a friend  
Trill forth harmonious ditty:  
Strange things I'll tell, which late befell  
In Philadelphia city.

'Twas early day, as poets say, 5  
Just when the sun was rising,  
A soldier stood on a log of wood  
And saw a thing surprising.

As in amaze he stood to gaze, 10  
The truth can't be denied, sir,  
He spied a score of kegs or more  
Come floating down the tide, sir.

A sailor, too, in jerkin blue, 15  
This strange appearance viewing,  
First damned his eyes, in great surprise,  
Then said, "Some mischief's brewing:

"These kegs, I'm told, the rebels hold,  
Packed up like pickled herring;  
And they're come down to attack the town,  
In this new way of ferrying." 20

The soldier flew, the sailor too,  
And scared almost to death, sir,  
Wore out their shoes to spread the news,  
And ran till out of breath, sir.



The royal band now ready stand,  
All ranged in dread array, sir,  
With stomachs stout, to see it out,  
And make a bloody day, sir. 60

The cannons roar from shore to shore,  
The small arms make a rattle;  
Since wars began, I'm sure no man  
E'er saw so strange a battle.

The rebel dales, the rebel vales, 65  
With rebel trees surrounded,  
The distant woods, the hills and floods,  
With rebel echoes sounded.

The fish below swam to and fro,  
Attacked from every quarter: 70  
"Why sure," thought they, "the devil's to pay  
'Mongst folks above the water."

The kegs, 'tis said, though strongly made  
Of rebel staves and hoops, sir,  
Could not oppose their powerful foes, 75  
The conquering British troops, sir.

From morn till night these men of might  
Displayed amazing courage,  
And when the sun was fairly down  
Retired to sup their porridge. 80

An hundred men, with each a pen,  
Or more, upon my word, sir,  
It is most true would be too few  
Their valor to record, sir.

Such feats did they perform that day 85  
Against those wicked kegs, sir,  
That years to come, if they get home,  
They'll make their boasts and brags, sir.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is satire? How effective do you consider it as a weapon?
2. Where else in this volume have you encountered satire? Compare other examples with this as to general spirit. Would you call this a bitter or a light satire?

*For Ambitious Students*

3. Write a bit of satire, in prose if you prefer, attacking something which you dislike.

SPEECH IN DEFENSE OF  
THE CONSTITUTION*by* ALEXANDER HAMILTON (1757-1804)

The following speech, one of many made by Hamilton in favor of ratification of the Constitution, was delivered on June 21, 1788, before the New York State Legislature. By the force of Hamilton's logic and oratory the sixty-five legislators, forty-six of whom were Antifederalists, were persuaded to ratify by a majority of three — a rare instance of the vote of a deliberative body changed by sheer argument. The speech answers the objection that the proposed Constitution did not prevent the rich and well-educated from gaining control of the government.

The sentiments expressed are typical of Hamilton's philosophy. In American thought the term "Hamiltonian" has come to characterize a belief in government by a selected group of the "best people," the more intelligent, the more wealthy, the more able, as contrasted with "Jeffersonian," which denotes faith in democratic government by the whole people. Jefferson was the liberal of his day; Hamilton, the conservative

SIR, WE hear constantly a great deal which is rather calculated to awake our passions, and create prejudices, than to conduct us to the truth, and teach us our real interests. I do not suppose this to be the design of the gentlemen. Why, then, are we told so often of an aristocracy? For my part, I hardly know the meaning of this word, as it is applied. If all we hear be true, this government is really a very bad one. But who are the aristocracy among us? Where do we find men elevated to a perpetual rank above their fellow citizens, and possessing powers entirely independent of them? The arguments of the gentlemen only go to prove that there are men who are rich, men who are poor, some who are wise, and others who are

not; that, indeed, every distinguished man is an aristocrat. This reminds me of a description of the aristocrats I have seen in a late publication styled the *Federal Farmer*. The author reckons in the aristocracy all governors of states, members of Congress, chief magistrates, and all officers of the militia. This description, I presume to say, is ridiculous. The image is a phantom. Does the new government render a rich man more eligible than a poor one? No. It requires no such qualification. It is bottomed on the broad and equal principle of your state constitution.

Sir, if the people have it in their option to elect their most meritorious men, is this to be considered as an objection? Shall the Constitution oppose their wishes and abridge their most invaluable privilege? While property continues to be pretty equally divided, and a considerable share of information pervades the community, the tendency of the people's suffrages will be to elevate merit even from obscurity. As riches increase and accumulate in few hands, as luxury prevails in society, virtue will be in a greater degree considered as only a graceful appendage of wealth, and the tendency of things will be to depart from the republican standard. This is the real disposition of human nature: it is what neither the honorable member nor myself can correct; it is a common misfortune, that awaits our state constitution as well as all others.

There is an advantage incident to large districts of election, which perhaps the gentlemen, amidst all their apprehensions of influence and bribery, have not adverted to. In large districts, the corruption of the electors is much more difficult; combinations for the purposes of intrigue are less easily formed; factions and cabals are little known. In a small district, wealth will have a more complete influence, because the people in the vicinity of a great man are more immediately his dependents, and because this influence has fewer objects to act upon. It has been remarked, that it would be disagreeable to the middle class of men to go to the seat of the new government. If this be so, the difficulty will be enhanced by the gentleman's proposal. If his argument be true, it proves that the larger the representation is, the less will be your chance of having it filled. But it appears to me frivolous to bring forward such arguments as these. It has answered no other purpose than to induce me, by way of reply, to enter into discussion, which I consider as useless, and not applicable to our subject.

It is a harsh doctrine that men grow wicked in proportion as they improve and enlighten their minds. Experience has by no means



justified us in the supposition that there is more virtue in one class of men than in another. Look through the rich and the poor of the community, the learned and the ignorant. Where does virtue predominate? The difference indeed consists, not in the quantity, but kind, of vices which are incident to various classes; and here the advantage of character belongs to the wealthy. Their vices are probably more favorable to the prosperity of the state than those of the indigent, and partake less of moral depravity.

After all, sir, we must submit to this idea, that the true principle of a republic is, that the people should choose whom they please to govern them. Representation is imperfect in proportion as the current of popular favor is checked. This great source of free government, popular election, should be perfectly pure and the most unbounded liberty allowed. Where this principle is adhered to; where, in the organization of the government, the legislative, executive, and judicial branches are rendered distinct; where, again, the legislature is divided into separate houses, and the operations of each are controlled by various checks and balances, and, above all, by the vigilance and weight of the state governments — to talk of tyranny, and the subversion of our liberties, is to speak the language of enthusiasm. This balance between the national and state governments ought to be dwelt on with peculiar attention, as it is of the utmost importance. It forms a double security to the people. If one encroaches on their rights, they will find a powerful protection in the other. Indeed, they will both be prevented from overpassing their constitutional limits, by a certain rivalry, which will ever subsist between them. I am persuaded that a firm union is as necessary to perpetuate our liberties as it is to make us respectable; and experience will probably prove that the national government will be as natural a guardian of our freedom as the state legislatures themselves.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Which of the four steps in the formula for argument on page 913 does Hamilton develop in this speech?
2. With what parts of Hamilton's argument do you agree? With what parts do you disagree?
3. What two prophecies does Hamilton make in this speech? Have they come to pass?
4. Contrast the political philosophies of Hamilton and Jefferson. Which is more nearly embodied in the United States Constitution? Toward which has been the trend of the general nature of the amendments?

5. The Preamble to the Constitution is well worth memorizing: "We, the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect Union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

### *For Your Vocabulary*

6. One of the most-used stems in English is *vert*, meaning to turn. You already know many words of the family, *divert* (to turn from), *convert* (to turn with), *avert* (to turn away). Hamilton uses two less common derivatives, *advert* (page 921) and *subversion* (page 922). *Advert* means to turn toward, and *subversion* means turning under, or destroying completely. You will find George Washington in his "Farewell Address" warning Americans against means by which unprincipled men can *subvert* the power of the people. All these verb forms ending in -t have noun forms ending in -sion. Two members of the *vert* family that we hear often are *introvert* and *extrovert*, nouns used to describe types of personality in which interest is turned inward upon one's own self (the *introvert*) or is turned on the world and affairs outside the individual (the *extrovert*).

### *For Ambitious Students*

7. Name three problems now facing our government, and state what you think would have been Hamilton's position in regard to each.

8. Read the Bill of Rights. What fundamental liberties are guaranteed in this part of the Constitution? Cite instances of recent attempts to deny these rights to individuals or groups.

## WASHINGTON'S FAREWELL ADDRESS

by GEORGE WASHINGTON (1732-1799)

To the people of the United States

September 17, 1796

(Selections)

Written in a formal and dignified style and employing a large and unusual vocabulary, "Washington's Farewell Address" presents considerable difficulty to the high-school student. However, since the modern American will frequently hear statesmen, politicians, and lecturers refer

to this document, it is well to know and understand the principles enunciated in this famous message by the father of our country. In the following selected passages you will find, in Washington's own words, statements of these basic principles, which he himself designated as "some sentiments, which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation, and which appear to me all-important to the permanency of your felicity as a people."

Perhaps some of you will care to look up and read the entire address. It is not easy reading, but it is a challenge to you to bring all the powers of your mind to bear on a worth-while message.

INTERWOVEN as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.

The unity of government, which constitutes you one people, is a main pillar of your real independence, the support of your tranquillity at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. The name of America, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. One of the expedients of party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts. You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heartburnings which spring from these misrepresentations.

The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their constitutions of government. But the constitution which at any time exists, till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the people to establish government presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established government.

All combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government.

Toward the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular opposition to its acknowledged authority,

but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. Remember that facility in changes, upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion; and remember, especially, that, for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours a government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian.

Let me warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the spirit of party generally. The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge, natural to party dissension is in itself a frightful despotism. The disorders and miseries which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an individual; and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction, more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purposes of his own elevation, on the ruins of public liberty.

The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and constituting each the guardian of the public weal against invasions by the others, has been evinced by experiments ancient and modern, some of them in our country and under our own eyes. To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If, in the opinion of the people, the distribution or modification of the constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates. But let there be no change by usurpation.

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.

Promote as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit.

Observe good faith and justice toward all nations; cultivate peace and harmony with all. The nation which indulges toward another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties, in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships and enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course. Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation? It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world. Even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand; neither seeking nor granting exclusive favors or preferences, constantly keeping in view that it is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another; that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. One of the prime difficulties in this speech is the vocabulary. Look up the following words before you read the speech: appellation, explicit, requisite, discountenance, baneful, reciprocal, weal, usurpation, indispensable, vicissitudes, disinterested.

2. In order to understand this address fully, you must be able to realize the difference between the United States in Washington's day and in ours. It would be well to have brief reports from members of the class on such matters as the boundaries, population, and political parties; conditions of commerce, manufacturing, and education; relationship with England, France, and other foreign nations; and the number of republics in the world at that time — comparing all of them with conditions in our own day.

3. The body of this address falls into two main parts: advice on home affairs and advice on foreign affairs. Make an outline of the points under each.

4. Washington warns emphatically against the dangers of long and decided affections or antipathies between nations. Can you think of any striking examples of this in the world's history or among countries today?

5. Compare the style of this speech with the sharp, terse sentences of Patrick Henry (pages 905-08) or the simplicity of Lincoln's phrasing (pages 1037-41). How is the style of an address intended for oral delivery likely to differ from that of one intended to be read in print?

*For Your Vocabulary*

6. Many of the difficult words in this "Address" are too formal to be used often in our informal times, but *expedient* (page 924) is useful in any day. As a noun it means a course of action designed to achieve a desired end, whether noble or base, important or trifling. Did you ever pretend to be ill as an *expedient* to keep from going to school? As an adjective, *expedient* means suitable or advantageous to the end in view, often as opposed to what is strictly right or admirable. *Expediency* is the quality of working effectively toward a desired end, and practical men of affairs must often be guided by motives of *expediency*. They choose their course in order to *expedite* the achievement of their aims. Does it make the word any clearer to know that it originally meant to get one's foot loose, ready to go places?

*For Ambitious Students*

7. In the light of changed conditions, which parts of Washington's advice do you think apply today and which do not? This affords good subject matter for informal debates.

8. An interesting project for a class or committee would be the making of two small world maps, one for his day, one for ours, to show the number of republics in the world. In both maps color absolute monarchies black, limited or constitutional monarchies gray, totalitarian states red, and leave republics white.

9. Washington's early biographers represented him as a kind of petrifed saint with a halo. It is curious that four of the writers who have tried their hands at making him a more natural human being and clearing away the fiction have been themselves eminent writers of fiction. These four biographies, all of which are highly interesting reading, are Washington Irving's *Life of Washington*, Paul Leicester Ford's *The True George Washington*, Owen Wister's *The Seven Ages of Washington*, and Rupert Hughes's *George Washington, 1762-1777*.

## AN APPRAISAL OF WASHINGTON

*by* THOMAS JEFFERSON

Washington's eight years as President (1789-1797) concluded the critical period of birth of the American republic. They showed that "the Father of his Country" was as great in peace as in war. Something of the nobility of the man is preserved in the "Farewell Address." But the great-

ness of Washington lay in his character and life more than in his writings. Therefore, we may be grateful to Jefferson for preserving his own impression of the man, in the following letter written at Monticello on January 2, 1814.

I THINK I knew General Washington intimately and thoroughly; and were I called on to delineate his character, it should be in terms like these.

His mind was great and powerful, without being of the very first order; his penetration strong, though not so acute as that of a Newton, Bacon, or Locke<sup>1</sup>; and as far as he saw, no judgment was ever sounder. It was slow in operation, being little aided by invention or imagination, but sure in conclusion. Hence the common remark of his officers, of the advantage he derived from councils of war, where, hearing all suggestions, he selected whatever was best; and certainly no general ever planned his battles more judiciously. But if deranged during the course of the action, if any member of his plan was dislocated by sudden circumstances, he was slow in readjustment. The consequence was, that he often failed in the field, and rarely against an enemy in station, as at Boston and York. He was incapable of fear, meeting personal dangers with the calmest unconcern.

Perhaps the strongest feature in his character was prudence, never acting until every circumstance, every consideration, was maturely weighed; refraining if he saw a doubt, but, when once decided, going through with his purpose, whatever obstacles opposed. His integrity was most pure, his justice the most inflexible I have ever known, no motives of interest or consanguinity, of friendship or hatred, being able to bias his decision. He was, in every sense of the words, a wise, a good, and a great man. His temper was naturally high-toned; but reflection and resolution had obtained a firm and habitual ascendancy over it. If ever, however, it broke its bonds, he was most tremendous in his wrath.

In his expenses he was honorable, but exact; liberal in contributions to whatever promised utility; but frowning and unyielding on all visionary projects and all unworthy calls on his charity. His heart was not warm in its affections; but he exactly calculated every man's value, and gave him a solid esteem proportioned to it. His person, you know, was fine, his stature exactly what one would wish, his deport-

<sup>1</sup> **Newton, Bacon, or Locke:** English philosophers and scientists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Newton was famous for discovering the law of gravitation, Bacon for developing the inductive method of scientific study, and Locke for his analysis of the mind.

ment easy, erect and noble; the best horseman of his age, and the most graceful figure that could be seen on horseback.

Although in the circle of his friends, where he might be unreserved with safety, he took a free share in conversation, his colloquial talents were not above mediocrity, possessing neither copiousness of ideas, nor fluency of words. In public, when called on for a sudden opinion, he was unready, short, and embarrassed. Yet he wrote readily, rather diffusely, in an easy and correct style. This he had acquired by conversation with the world, for his education was merely reading, writing, and common arithmetic, to which he added surveying at a later day. His time was employed in action chiefly, reading little, and that only in agriculture and English history. His correspondence became necessarily extensive, and, with journalizing his agricultural proceedings, occupied most of his leisure hours within doors.

On the whole, his character was, in its mass, perfect, in nothing bad, in few points indifferent; and it may truly be said, that never did nature and fortune combine more perfectly to make a man great, and to place him in the same constellation with whatever worthies have merited from man an everlasting remembrance. For his was the singular destiny and merit, of leading the armies of his country successfully through an arduous war, for the establishment of its independence, of conducting its councils through the birth of a government, new in its forms and principles, until it had settled down into a quiet and orderly train; and of scrupulously obeying the laws through the whole of his career, civil and military, of which the history of the world furnishes no other example.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What facts not given here can you offer in support of the view that Washington's character was remarkable?
2. What passages in the "Farewell Address" illustrate characteristics pointed out by Jefferson?
3. Vocabulary: delineate, deranged, integrity, consanguinity, ascendancy, colloquial, journalizing.





## *Chapter IV*

### AMERICAN LITERARY INDEPENDENCE AND ROMANTICISM

(1800-1870)

THE VICTORY at Yorktown in 1781 brought political independence and peace to the young nation. From now on it was in a position to develop an intellectual and cultural life of its own. In the transformation of a wilderness into a civilized nation we may see three marked stages:

First, the period of discovery and exploration, when emphasis must be laid upon the mere essentials of sustaining life

Second, the period of settlement, with increase in the material comforts of life and with the development of simple but often colorful folk culture

Third, the period of maturity with rapid advancement in education, manners, and the arts

The history of our country presents a steadily westward rolling of these three waves. After 1800, while the frontier was rapidly pushing across the Alleghenies into the great central plains, the eastern seaboard was about to enter its third stage. Pride in the new nation and increasing prosperity led to the rapid establishment of schools, colleges, newspapers, magazines, printing presses, lyceum lectures, literary clubs, debating societies, libraries, bookshops — everything that was mentally stimulating. There was more time and more desire for reading than in colonial days. The hour was ripe for the production

of a literature of leisure — a literature of finished quality, a literature that wins the reader not just by what is told, but also by the way of the telling. And so it came about that in the first half of the nineteenth century our national literature bloomed for the first time into colors rich enough to win the admiration of the rest of the world. With the score of writers included in this chapter, most of whom are already known to you, American literature in its highest sense may be said to have begun.

**American writers declare independence.** Aside from the fact that the writers in this chapter were contemporaries, there are two bonds that bring them into a unified group. The first is that they stood for the literary independence of the United States. Our political independence had been stated in a formal document with many signers. Our literary independence was declared no less truly in many an individual manuscript signed by its author alone. Sometimes these took the form of direct discussions of the matter, as in certain essays by Emerson and Lowell, but more often they were tacit declarations through able picturing of the American life of their day or of American history. Observe, as you read details about the work of these authors, how repeatedly the American note is struck. This had not been so true of the few authors of colonial days who had aspired to literary fame. The first poet of the colonies, Anne Bradstreet, wrote stilted imitations of English poets picturing English scenery, and was introduced to the London public as "The Tenth Muse lately sprung up in America." Later scholarly poets of the colonies were almost entirely imitative and seemed to cater to English taste. Novelists there were who pictured the local scene, but they were not skillful enough to win the critical approbation of a later day. Before 1800 America had not really been put on the literary map of the world; within fifty years she had won a recognized place there.

Do not get the false impression that because our early nineteenth-century writers emphasized American themes they were "isolationists." They were, for the most part, familiar with European history and literature through both education and travel. Some of them officially represented the United States in European courts. Several of them lived abroad for long periods and made intimate friends among foreign writers. Many of them wrote on foreign as well as native themes. The point is that they were not afraid or ashamed to admit themselves American while mingling on equal terms with those who belonged to the older civilization. Nationally as well as individually they stood on their own feet.

**The meaning of romanticism.** The second respect in which this group of writers show a unified spirit is in their romanticism. We have seen that the great part of literature written during colonial days was from one or another of two points of view — the Puritan or the common sense. Now we come to a third — the romantic.

This point of view is probably your own, because most people are romanticists when they reach high-school age. If you dream great dreams of how you are going to become famous, or how you are going to make the world a perfect place to live in; if you are overflowing with energy and ambition: if you scoff at traditions, become impatient at restraint, want to try everything new; if you think that all authorities are "old fogies"; if you act because you "feel like it" rather than because you have "thought it over"; if you believe that the place in which you live is not so interesting as the ones just a little farther off, which you will reach as soon as you have a chance; if you find that "every ship is romantic except the one we are riding on"; if you envy explorers and adventurers like Admiral Byrd and Richard Halliburton; if you sometimes grow a bit depressed and melancholy when you think how much difference there is between your dreams and your everyday life — if you can answer "yes" to these "ifs," you are a good romanticist and will be able to understand the point of view from which much of America's greatest literature was written in the nineteenth century.

**The Romantic Revolution in Europe.** Romanticism came to America from Europe. It had begun there as a revolution — for there are literary as well as military revolutions. The European writers rebelled against the literary styles of the preceding century. The eighteenth century had an irritating way of deciding everything. It made huge dictionaries. It judged all writers from Shakespeare down by its own standards. It decided that the heroic couplet was the best form of verse, and wrote all its verse in heroic couplets. From this sort of thing men like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, and other English poets turned in horror. They wanted to write as they saw fit. They were tired of the matter-of-fact, logical attitude; they wanted imagination. They wanted to dream. But most of all, they wanted to be free to do as they felt like doing.

There was a large and influential Romantic school in Germany also, but probably the greatest single Romantic influence upon the mind of the world was that of the Frenchman Jean Jacques Rousseau. He revolted against the idea that man is naturally bad and needs as much civilizing and refining as possible in order to subordinate his

natural instincts and impulses. Rousseau said that everything natural is good. A man who lives in a jungle is likely to be happier than one who lives in London and converses daily with the great men of the time. The better nature of man has been frozen up by the artificialities of civilization. We need to go back to fundamentals which are not man-made, to the simple life, to a study and love of nature, to an obedience of our instincts and impulses.

All these ideas went into European romantic literature — freedom of literary form, freedom in imagination, return to nature. And because the romanticist so often dreamed of an ideal which, like the blue flower on the mountainside, is always just out of reach, he was often inclined to be sad and melancholy. This was the heritage of romanticism that Europe passed on to America.

**Romanticism on American soil.** The seed fell on fertile ground in America. Having completed one successful political revolution, we were ready to attack other old ideas. One of these was the Puritan notion that the human race through Adam's sin is naturally depraved. The romanticist's idea that man is naturally good was a pleasant antidote to this distressing thought. The Puritan had been taught to repress his instincts because they might be sinful; the romanticist was taught to humor them because everything natural was good. The Puritan was taught to fear the wrath of God and to court a gracious salvation from eternal punishment; the romanticist was taught to love God, whose work appeared everywhere in nature.

A second thing that was ripe for change was common-sense rationalism. The eighteenth century was too hardheaded. It never got its feet off the ground. Even Franklin, one of the grandest Americans who ever lived, had his limitations. The sensible man will always make sensible decisions, but he may miss a lot of fun — the joys of imagination, the solace of carefree dreaming, and the thrill of spontaneous action. He is pretty sure to miss many of the spiritual experiences of life. So America was ready to throw away both Puritan and rational restraint and try something else.

Another reason why America responded to romanticism was geographic and historical. Before the Revolution no considerable settlement had been pushed west of the Alleghenies. At the close of the war the long-pent-up tide burst through the passes. By 1800 there were four hundred thousand white men and women west of the mountains. They found millions of acres of rich free land for the asking. Those who stayed in the East heard glowing tales of the endless opportunity beyond the ranges — tales of the health, wealth, property,

and power that waited only for the man who would seek them. There everyone was as good as his neighbor. Who could forbear to dream of the future of the Western land? Who could resist the idea of going back to nature when nature spread itself so lavishly before him? Who could refrain from building air castles, perhaps beside the northern falls of Niagara or near the distant Mississippi? Who could, indeed? The frontier was made of romantic dreams.

Though America provided an ideal garden spot for the seeds of romanticism, what grew from them on this side of the Atlantic was not the same as that in Europe. A three-hundred-year course in restraint would not let America entirely forget the habit. A race of Puritans, a race of Yankees, a race of clearheaded Southern statesmen would never go to the extremes that some countries, such as Germany, reached. The American attitude was perhaps never better expressed than by Thoreau when he said, "Build your castles in the air, but be sure they have foundations." Franklin would have liked that statement; it has lots of Yankee in it. The American romanticist was much more likely to be interested in humble life and the common man than in fantastic air castles. Fittingly enough, the movement in the New World has been called "Romanticism on Puritan soil." It was dominant in literature from the early 1800's until after the War between the States; and even though it yielded place to other influences after that, nevertheless Romanticism is still alive today.

**Two forerunners of Romanticism.** Before discussing the great writers of this half century, it might be well to mention two men who stood on the threshold of America's literary fame. Like Moses they led others to the promised land but did not enter it themselves, for neither is read by the general public today.

Philip Freneau (1752-1832) began as a satirist during the Revolution, but even before the end of the war a change came over his poetry. With well-turned phrases he pictured the short life of an American flower in "The Wild Honeysuckle" and felt the romance of the Indian in "The Indian Burying Ground." In fact, he was the first American to realize how romantic the Indian was. The Puritans had been too busy protecting their scalps against him, and the rationalists had not been interested in making a hero of him. Though Freneau's early poetry is typically that of the eighteenth century, his later work opens the door to the new era.

Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) was the first writer who insisted that Americans should deal with American themes. Cease to depend on Europe, he urged; be honest, be original, be American.

# LITERARY INDEPENDENCE AND ROMANTICISM

| 1800 | 1850                              | 1860 1865                        | 1900 |
|------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------|
|      |                                   | War between the States           |      |
| 1783 | Washington Irving                 | 1859                             |      |
|      | 1819 <i>The Sketch Book</i>       |                                  |      |
| 1789 | J. F. Cooper                      | 1851                             |      |
|      | 1821 <i>The Spy</i>               |                                  |      |
| 1794 | W. C. Bryant                      | 1878                             |      |
|      | 1817 <i>Thanatopsis</i>           | 1866 <i>Translation of Iliad</i> |      |
| 1803 | R. W. Emerson                     | 1882                             |      |
|      | 1837 <i>The American Scholar</i>  |                                  |      |
| 1804 | Nathaniel Hawthorne               | 1864                             |      |
|      | <i>Twice Told Tales</i> 1837      | 1850 <i>The Scarlet Letter</i>   |      |
| 1806 | Wm. G. Simms                      | 1870                             |      |
|      | 1835 <i>The Yemassee</i>          |                                  |      |
| 1807 | J. G. Whittier                    | 1892                             |      |
|      |                                   | 1866 <i>Snowbound</i>            |      |
| 1807 | H. W. Longfellow                  | 1882                             |      |
|      | <i>Evangeline</i> 1847            | 1855 <i>Hiawatha</i>             |      |
| 1809 | O. W. Holmes                      | 1894                             |      |
|      | <i>Old Ironsides</i> 1830         | 1858                             |      |
| 1809 | E. A. Poe                         | 1849                             |      |
|      | <i>The Raven</i> 1845             |                                  |      |
| 1817 | H. D. Thoreau                     | 1862                             |      |
|      |                                   | 1854 <i>Walden</i>               |      |
| 1819 | J. R. Lowell                      | 1891                             |      |
|      | <i>Vision of Sir Launfal</i> 1848 | 1865 <i>Commemoration Ode</i>    |      |
| 1819 | Herman Melville                   | 1891                             |      |
|      |                                   | 1851 <i>Moby Dick</i>            |      |
| 1819 | Walt Whitman                      | 1892                             |      |
|      |                                   | 1855 <i>Leaves of Grass</i>      |      |
| 1829 | Henry Timrod                      | 1867                             |      |
|      |                                   | 1860 <i>Volumes of Verse</i>     |      |
| 1830 | P. H. Hayne                       | 1886                             |      |
|      |                                   | 1855 <i>Volume of Verse</i>      |      |
| 1830 | Emily Dickinson                   | 1886                             |      |
|      |                                   | 1890                             |      |
| 1842 | Sidney Lanier                     | 1881                             |      |
|      |                                   | <i>Poems first published</i>     |      |
|      |                                   | 1877                             |      |
|      |                                   | <i>Song of the Chattahoochee</i> |      |

His romanticism centered on the horror tale, which he told with great vividness. His novels include incidents of the yellow-fever epidemic in Philadelphia, a sleepwalker's experience, a religious maniac's sacrifice of his family, and a villain's use of ventriloquism. So popular were these tales that Brown was the first American to make a living from fiction.

**Chief literary centers.** During the early nineteenth century there were three chief literary centers along the Atlantic coast: Boston and its environs for the New England states, New York for the Central states, and Charleston, South Carolina, for the Southern states. Each of these centers had its literary coterie, with numerous minor writers circling about a few leaders. New York first came into prominence, but New England produced the largest number of major writers. Charleston was handicapped by a late start and the early blight of a devastating war.

For the sake of clearness the many writers in this chapter have been arranged by pairs or small groups according to time and geographical location when possible, but our greatest writers defy such limitations.

### I. *Irving and Cooper — New Yorkers Applauded at Home and Abroad*

Washington Irving is the first great name of the Romantic Movement in America, and one of the first names with which the American child becomes acquainted through "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow." Here we find the romance of the American legend with touches of humor and pathos, told in the finished style of one who had studied the great English essayists. These stories are deservedly called American classics. But Irving had written on local themes long before that. In his youth he had published with two other friends a periodical called *Salmagundi* [*Salad*] *Papers*, in which the New York of his day was satirized in lively style. Then he set out to parody a pedantic guidebook of New York; but gradually he found himself shifting into a humorous history, which finally left his pen as *Knickerbocker's History of New York* (1809). He caricatured the old Dutch governors — Wouter Van Twiller "exactly five feet six inches in height and six feet five inches in circumference," and Peter Stuyvesant, the Headstrong, who abolished the use of oyster shells as money. But there was nothing bitter or sarcastic about Irving's humor. He loved these old stories and chuckled as

good-naturedly when he wrote them, as did New Yorkers when they read them. There is nothing side-splitting about the Knickerbocker history, but there is no more delightful, quiet humor in all our literature.

Ten years later financial necessity led Irving to publish *The Sketch Book*, under the pen name of Geoffrey Crayon. By this time he had had considerable experience abroad. Side by side with the American Rip and Ichabod Crane we find "The Specter Bridegroom," based on a German legend, and many graceful, sympathetic sketches of English life and scenery. Within the next few years he continued his English sketches in *Bracebridge Hall* and his European legends in *Tales of a Traveler*. Then he turned his steps toward Spain, a treasure house, indeed, for a lover of legends. *The Alhambra* is a sort of Spanish Sketch Book, partly stories, partly descriptive sketches. Here, too, he first began writing biography with his *Life of Columbus*. Later, in America, he wrote a long *Life of Washington* and several shorter biographies. During the 1830's Irving made an extensive trip into the newly opening West, from which *A Tour of the Prairies* and other books resulted; but he is not remembered for his Western writings as for his other work. His most successful subjects were: the early Dutch settlers of New York; the picturesque countryside and people of England; the romantic legends of continental Europe, especially Spain; and the lives of great men.

Irving won the acclaim of writers and critics at home and abroad. When his work was first published in England anonymously, some surmised that it must be the work of Scott — high praise, indeed, in that day. His varied subject matter, polished style, and widespread reputation inevitably place him as our first real man of letters.

**James Fenimore Cooper.** There is a curious contrast between the career of Irving and that of his famous contemporary Cooper. Both were New Yorkers; but Irving grew up in thriving New York City, while Cooper spent his boyhood on the western frontier of the state. Irving, therefore, learned the manners of a literary center and the legends of the old Dutch settlers; Cooper, on the other hand, learned the woodsman's secrets and the stories of the frontier. Irving spent much of his life in England and Spain, while Cooper did his early traveling as a seaman and later lived several years in France. One discovered the romance of Europe, the other the romance of the sea. Irving, living in a literary atmosphere, published his first writings before he was twenty. Cooper had explored the New York frontier, sailed the seven seas, and retired to the life of a country gentleman before — at the age of thirty — he began his first novel.



He wrote the book on a dare. His wife was reading an inferior English novel, which Cooper criticized severely. "Let's see you write a better one," his wife said, laughing. Cooper set to work. His first novel was fully as dull as the one which had started the argument, but his wife's good-humored challenge proved to be the most successful "dare" in American literature. Cooper was dissatisfied with his novel. He realized that he had made the mistake of writing about England, which he did not know, instead of America which he did know. "Ashamed to have fallen into the track of imitation," he later explained, "I endeavored to repay the wrong done to my own views, by producing a work that should be purely American and of which love of country should be the theme." Cooper's great success began with this decision.

The first product of the new plan was *The Spy*, a moving story of the Revolution. Cooper was on his own ground now, and the story had a convincing ring. "With this novel," says Carl Van Doren, "American fiction may be said to have come of age."

Cooper's greatest novels, the Leatherstocking Tales, were also based on his experiences in the woods and on the lakes of his native state. They tell the life story of one of the greatest characters in American fiction, Natty Bumppo, a forest scout who illustrates the nobility which nature teaches its faithful students. The following order of the titles shows the unfolding of Natty's life from youth to old age; but the dates show that Cooper wrote them in quite a different order, the period of youth being the last one written: *The Deerslayer* (1842), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Pathfinder* (1840), *The Pioneers* (1823), and *The Prairie* (1827).

Cooper made yet another contribution to American literature. In *The Pilot* (1824) he drew on his experiences before the mast, and proved for the first time that the sea could be an interesting subject for fiction.

If you look closely at all of Cooper's heroes — Harvey Birch, the hunchback of *The Spy*; Natty Bumppo, the scout; Long Tom Coffin of *The Pilot* — you will see that none of them is quite true to life. His Indian characters have been criticized as being "idealized red men" instead of real Indians. All his characters are idealized. This was Cooper's romanticism. His heroes acquire their virtues from nature herself, with whom they live in close communion. City men look pale and ineffective beside his shrewd, clear-eyed, noblehearted scouts. He would have us seek happiness and wisdom in the woods or on the sea.

Cooper is great because he could tell a good story — and for that reason a world of avid readers forgave him his faults: his awkward and often careless style; the many impossible incidents in his stories; and the weak character drawing, especially of women. One could hardly expect too careful workmanship from a man who turned out more than thirty volumes. His books were more widely read during the nineteenth century than those of any other American author. They were translated into many languages and sold throughout Europe. His own travels were a triumphal march. He loved to be lionized. Unfortunately, upon his return to America he published a book which was highly critical of the New World in comparison with the Old. This involved him in literary quarrels, which together with his queer natural cantankerousness plunged him into countless lawsuits and took away much of his personal popularity during his declining years. Here again he was in contrast to the affable, diplomatic Irving.

## 2. *Bryant and Whittier — Poets of the Countryside and Crusaders*

William Cullen Bryant is a link between the New Yorkers whom we have just discussed and the New Englanders who follow, for he lived and wrote in both places. Though his years in New York were many more than those in Massachusetts, he belongs in spirit and accomplishment with the New England group. You have read "Thanatopsis" and the unusual circumstances of its publication (page 467). This single poem tells us almost all we need to know about Bryant's verse. He wrote nothing better and he published nothing greatly inferior to it. It explains both his background and his attitude toward life. The Calvinistic home of his boyhood taught him the restraint that was always to characterize his writings. It was his strength because it kept him from wild flights of imagination, but also his weakness because it often made his writing seem cold (Lowell humorously spoke of it as "iceolation"). Early in life he learned to think much of the grave. Early in life he learned the austere morality of the code he always advocated. Bryant, therefore, is an interesting example of the merging of Puritanism and romanticism. The latter element showed itself most strongly in his intense love of nature. In his poems we find the birds and the flowers of the American scene — the waterfowl, the bobolink, the prairie hawk; the fringed

gentian, the golden rod, the yellow violet blossoming beside a snow-bank. We hear the sweep of summer wind through pine forests; we see the winter woods "cased in the pure crystal." We stand in awe before the endless prairies "for which the speech of England has no name." Bryant introduced into the poetry of English-speaking people a new fauna and flora. He is our first great nature poet. Or we may omit the word "nature" and say that he is our first great poet — the first in whose work an adequate technique supported an adequate content.

When at thirty-one Bryant exchanged his country law practice for a New York newspaper job, he devoted himself thereafter largely to prose. He became a really great editor, upholding in the *Evening Post* the best standards of ethics and taste. He entered into the controversial issue of slavery and defended the freedom of the press. In great demand as a public speaker, he came to be regarded as one of the foremost citizens of New York and, with his long white beard, was treated almost like a patriarch of old. During this period of activity a new note came into his poetry, illustrated by such poems as "The Battlefield" (see page 471) and "The Crowded Street." He still wrote nature poems, but they often suggest nature as a refuge from the turmoil of city life.

The third stage of his poetry is that of scholarly work. Between the ages of seventy and eighty he published translations in blank verse of both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. But the poems of his youth are the real preservers of his name.

John Greenleaf Whittier exactly reversed the order of Bryant's work. He was first the crusader and later the poet of the countryside. Both men did most of their pleading of causes through newspaper editing, but Whittier's poetry shows a much larger proportion of crusading than Bryant's. He was the great poet of the antislavery movement. His first printed poem "The Exile's Departure" appeared in the paper edited by the famous abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison, who urged this promising disciple to get an education. His first volume of poems, published at the age of thirty, was concerned almost entirely with the abolition question, as were his later volumes up to the time of the War between the States. He described himself as

a dreamer born,  
Who with a mission to fulfill,  
Had left the Muses' haunts to turn  
The crank of an opinion mill.

Whittier fought with his pen the battle that his Quaker principles would not let him fight with the sword. When the abolition amendment came, his poem "Laus Deo" ("Praise God") was his exultant cry of victory.

But propaganda usually destroys the permanent value of a piece of literature. Although "Ichabod" (see page 481) and "Barbara Frietchie" are still well known, Whittier is read today not for his anti-slavery poems, but for his pictures of New England country life and the legends of its past. Some of these poems were written before the War between the States; but most of them came in the peaceful days following it, when Whittier returned to the mood of Robert Burns, his first inspiration. "Maud Muller," "The Barefoot Boy," "In School Days," and many other favorites portray the types that Whittier knew at firsthand. But greatest of all his country poems is "Snowbound," which reflects the bleakness of a New England winter vanquished by good cheer and family devotion withindoors. Written soon after the death of his mother and two sisters, with no one left to the bachelor poet but one brother, the poem has a peculiar richness of reminiscence. Upon its publication in 1866 it was hailed as the greatest American pastoral poem. It would be difficult to name one of a later date to supplant it for that title.

Two other subjects of poetry were typical of Whittier: legend or history (the border line is often hard to recognize) and religion. Representative of the first of these are "Skipper Ireson's Ride" (see page 483), "The Angels of Buena Vista," and many of the stories in *The Tent on the Beach*. His religious poems set Whittier somewhat aside from the other New Englanders. True, the others tended to moralize and show the influence of their Puritan ancestry; but Whittier's deep faith and serenity of soul give a spiritual tone to his entire point of view, which makes the mere pointing of moral lessons seem weak in comparison.

### 3. *Emerson and Thoreau — Transcendentalists of Concord*

An easy hour's ride out of Boston toward the northwest lies Concord, a village of historic and literary fame. Perhaps the first landmark you will notice will be the great statue of "The Minute Man" overlooking the little Concord River. On the pedestal of the statue is a stanza by Concord's most famous son, Emerson, beginning, "By

the rude bridge that arched the flood." Only a stone's throw away is the Old Manse, where Emerson's grandfather once lived and where Hawthorne wrote *Mosses from an Old Manse*. Hawthorne's later home, Wayside, on the other side of the village, is next door to Louisa Alcott's home. Not far away across the road is Emerson's home, with its fine colonial front and the avenue of trees he himself planted. Most of these houses are now memorial museums. A short walk out of town brings you to Walden Pond, where you will see the marker indicating the site of Thoreau's hut. All these men now lie in Sleepy Hollow cemetery in the village.

This is Concord, village of genius. How astonishing it is that in the nineteenth century these few hundred people should produce almost as much great thinking as the rest of New England put together. Here rather than in great cities appeared the finest flowering of romanticism united with the New England tradition. Scholars call these Concord men "transcendentalists."

What is transcendentalism? Transcendentalism is first a rejection of the common sense and reason in which the age of Franklin had such faith. To the transcendentalists the pots and pans of ordinary life and the cobweb spinning of logic seemed unimportant. They wanted something deeper, more spiritual, more arousing. This they found in a new enthusiasm for the individual man — if he would but wake up. The road to truth and happiness, they thought, lay through sincere feeling and intuition — spiritual "hunches." They trusted the goodness of human instincts and believed that divine hints could come to man in the fields and the woods. In short, they were romanticists. But the moral ways of the land of Jonathan Edwards had left a stamp upon them. They did not run wild, nor sentimentalize over ancient ruins, nor assume a melancholy pose, nor defy moral codes as romanticists abroad sometimes did. Their beliefs were positive and energizing. Their talk of man's soul and its communion with God and Nature was sometimes bewildering to the common-sensical type of person, but their ideas left a real imprint upon American thinking. Transcendentalism, in short, was the new romanticism as modified by the old, lingering Puritanism.

The transcendentalists were never a church nor even a club. For a few years (1840-44) they published a magazine, the *Dial*, to which most of them contributed. Some of them tried an experiment in community living at the famous Brook Farm, but they lived too much in the realm of thought to make practical farmers. Transcendentalism, however, was independent of such activities. Its followers remained

true to their belief, living their own lives, obeying the dictates of their inner selves. "Self-reliance" was their motto; "plain living and high thinking" was their practice. They cared little for traditional dogma and organized religion, but tried to "live in the spirit." They repeatedly called upon Americans to think less about money, business, and social position, and more about the real values in life. "*Things* are in the saddle, and ride mankind," declared Emerson. He was their greatest spokesman.

**Ralph Waldo Emerson.** One August afternoon in 1837 a young man delivered the annual address to the Phi Beta Kappa society of Harvard. His subject, "The American Scholar," had often been discussed before, but what he had to say proved strangely exciting. A younger man named Thoreau walked home from the lecture with his head in the clouds. Oliver Wendell Holmes called it "our intellectual Declaration of Independence." The author of this speech was Ralph Waldo Emerson, then thirty-four years of age. He had already known tragedy in the death of his first wife, and spiritual crisis in his decision to leave the ministry. He had traveled in Europe, had published his first volume, *Nature* (which few people purchased and fewer understood), had read his "Concord Hymn" (see page 474) at the semi-centennial. Thus he came to August, 1837, a man who had thought deeply about life and was not afraid to utter his thoughts. This address shocked many in his audience. The next year he addressed the Harvard Divinity School, and charmed the young men while he shocked the faculty. He went on for the rest of his life shocking people — shocking them into thinking. But people liked it. Emerson was in great demand as a lecturer, going sometimes as far west as Iowa and Minnesota. His visits to England cemented his friendship with Thomas Carlyle, also an independent and vigorous thinker. New England was ready for an intellectual stimulant, and Emerson was the man to administer it. Literate America so revered him that he became known as the Sage of Concord.

**Emerson's message.** The message Emerson gave the Phi Beta Kappa society in 1837 contained the essence of all his later advice to America. The scholar, he said, is man thinking. The American scholar is the American thinking. Therefore, throw off the bonds of Europe. Do not depend upon the conventions, customs, traditions of Europe. America needs something different. But how should we go about thinking? There are three influences on the mind of the scholar, he said. One is the mind of the past — books. We should, of course, know what the great thinkers have written. *But* "books are for the

scholar's idle times," he thundered. The scholar has more important things to do than sit in libraries. He must study nature, because the same divinity which gives life to man is in everything living and can there be found. But even this is not sufficient. The scholar must translate his ideas into action. His thinking should bear fruit.

Then he gave his final advice. "Trust thyself," he said. "Every heart vibrates to that iron string!" It has never been said better. Think for yourself. Act for yourself. What lies deepest in you is nothing less than divine. You can understand how Americans of that day must have been moved. They had leaned too heavily upon the crutch of European culture. Now they were asked to throw it aside and stand erect. No longer mere bookworms and dilettantes, they were to become leaders of thought in a new world.

Emerson's writings. There is nothing to be gained by repeating the names of Emerson's books. All his prose publications were essays, no matter what the title of the volume. They were distinguished by a peculiar quality of style which made each essay a collection of wise, vivid sayings rather than a continuous argument. Emerson himself recognized this and said that his sentences were "infinitely repellent particles." His great genius lay in coining epigrams which pierced his readers like arrows:

Hitch your wagon to a star.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds.

Travel is a fool's paradise.

His poems are rough in style, stimulating in thought. Like his essays they encourage his readers to live higher, nobler lives, to seek beauty and truth (to Emerson these were the same thing), to trust themselves. Perhaps no other American has so well deserved the description Matthew Arnold applied to Emerson: "Friend and aider to those who would live in the spirit."

Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau was Emerson's best pupil. He went to Harvard, read voraciously, then put the mind of the past away from him and dedicated himself to the study of nature. On the shores of Walden Pond he built a little hut and lived for two years at an expense of twenty-seven cents a day. No one has described this part of Thoreau's life so well as Emerson:

He knew the country like a fox or a bird, and passed through it freely by paths of his own. Under his arm he carried an old music book to press plants; in his pocket his diary and pencil, a spyglass for birds, microscope,

jackknife, and twine. He wore a straw hat, stout shoes, strong gray trousers to brave scrub oaks and smilax, and to climb a tree for a hawk's or a squirrel's nest. He waded into the pool for the water plants. He chose to be rich by making his wants few and supplying them himself.

Here was "plain living and high thinking" indeed. The birds and animals came to know him as a friend, and we might say of him as was said of another naturalist: either the bees told him things or he told the bees.

He was as rugged an individualist as even Emerson could have wished. Early in his life he decided that he could make a better lead pencil than anyone else had made. He did — but declined to market his invention and turned to what he considered more important things, such as individual freedom. If the state cramped his individuality, he said, "I quietly declare war with the state."

Amidst all this, however, there was a great deal of Yankee wit. When he financed the publication of his first book, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers*, only three hundred of the thousand copies were sold. Thoreau brought the remaining ones home and wrote that he now had a library of nearly nine hundred volumes — seven hundred of which he had written himself! He was not in favor of slavery, but he declined to be a militant reformer. There was a more important duty. "I came into the world not chiefly to make this a good place to live in," he declared, "but to live in it, be it good or bad." When he lay dying, a lady asked him to tell her about the new world he was at that moment entering. "One world at a time," he protested. "One world at a time."

**His books and his reputation.** The best way to taste the rich flavor of this unique personality is to read his most famous book, *Walden* (1854), which is full of his observations of nature and his stimulating philosophy. This book has carried Thoreau's ideas to the end of the world. In his own time Thoreau was not highly thought of except by a few men. The world saw his idiosyncrasies and laughed or was offended. After his death, however, the world began to understand. Mahatma Gandhi is one of the many great men of our own time who look upon Thoreau as a prophet. We have come to regard him as one of the indisputable classics of our literature, and his advice is heard more and more often — Live simply, live close to nature, live your own life.

**Other transcendentalists.** Emerson and Thoreau were only two of the brilliant and famous persons who were linked together under



the name of "transcendentalists." Here we need mention the names of only two others. Bronson Alcott, father of Louisa May Alcott (author of *Little Women*), was ever active in new schemes for reaching the ideal — new kinds of schools, ideal colonies, and conversations with children to learn of the natural goodness with which they had been born. Margaret Fuller was a brilliant woman, one of the most vigorous of the progressive group of Boston and Concord, and first editor of the *Dial*. Hawthorne was for a short time associated with the movement, but never one of the inner circle.

#### 4. *Hawthorne and Melville — New England Writers of Fiction*

**Nathaniel Hawthorne.** Poetry and essay flourished much more widely among the authors during New England's golden age than did fiction. One man, Nathaniel Hawthorne, towers above all other fiction writers of that section of the country. Beside Hawthorne's profoundly moving stories, even Irving's charm seems a bit superficial and Cooper's heroics rather juvenile. Hawthorne is mature, challenging, mysterious. He speaks often through symbols, and his reader must constantly stop and ask himself, "Now what did Hawthorne mean by that?" We can, however, write down a handful of words and phrases which serve as keys to his genius: Salem, Concord, Puritanism, sin, men and society, insight and artistic finish.

Salem, rich in old stories of witchcraft persecutions, smugglers and sea captains, was his boyhood home. He loved it, saturated himself with it. He used Salem's House of the Seven Gables as the setting for one of his best books. He buried himself in Salem for twelve years while he perfected his technique, destroying and rewriting manuscripts to suit his critical taste. His first volume of stories thus earned the title *Twice Told Tales* (1837; second series, 1842).

Concord links Hawthorne's name with the transcendentalists. At first sympathetic with their ideals, he had a brief experience in their Utopian colony at Brook Farm; but he was soon glad to be relieved of the irksome duties of caring for Margaret Fuller's high-spirited "transcendental heifer," as he called the animal. Several years' residence in Concord kept him in close touch with the transcendentalists, and his third novel, *The Blithedale Romance*, reflected his Brook Farm experience. Concord's Old Manse stimulated his second collection of stories, *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). The romance of old

buildings recurs constantly in Hawthorne's work as an often somber background for the human drama.

Perhaps no other nineteenth-century writer was so saturated with the fire and shadow of Puritanism as was Hawthorne. He was greatly concerned with the problem of sin, and its effect on the relation of an individual to society. His answers to the problems in his stories were not the Puritan answers, but he saw things from the Puritan point of view. *The Scarlet Letter* (1850), his first novel, and many people say the greatest American novel, is a study of the effect of sin on three people. Two men conceal their sins and are gradually torn to pieces by them. A woman expiates hers in public and, having risen above it by suffering, becomes the happiest of the three. Hawthorne's Puritan inheritance told him that sin is deadly and that man is wicked; at the same time his romantic leanings told him that the world is good and that the way to happiness is in free expression. *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) is a study of the effect of greed and injustice on a New England family. *The Marble Faun* (1860) is a story of conscience in an Italian setting. Similar problems run through his most famous short stories. You know many of them: "The Minister's Black Veil" (see page 72), "Ethan Brand," "Rappaccini's Daughter," "Lady Eleanor's Mantle." But one of his best-known stories, "The Great Stone Face," shows the opposite side of the picture — the power and contagion of true nobility. It is said to have been based on the personality of Emerson.

We have two key words left: insight and artistic finish. Not only could Hawthorne see deep within the human heart, but he told what he saw with exquisite artistry. His use of striking symbols to convey his ideas, his rhythm and flowing smoothness of style give a poetic quality to his prose. He shows a delicate skill in the balancing of details. *The Scarlet Letter*, according to Brander Matthews, is "the most perfectly proportioned work of fiction that America has yet produced."

Herman Melville is linked with Hawthorne in several ways. Their personal friendship was one of the most noted among our literary men. It is largely through his letters to Hawthorne that we learn of Melville's mental agonies while producing a novel. Both writers picture the struggles of the human soul. They are the only New England writers of that day whose novels have met the critical approval of our own time. Melville, in fact, has greatly risen in reputation on the strength of his masterpiece, *Moby Dick*, which in his own day was not so popular as many of his earlier, more exaggerated South Sea

tales. Could Melville have foreseen this deferred recognition, he would not have felt the discouragement shown in the following passage from one of his letters:

What reputation Herman Melville has is horrible. Think of it. To go down to posterity as the man who lived among the cannibals. When I speak of posterity in reference to myself, I only mean the babies who will probably be born in the moment immediately ensuing upon my giving up the ghost. . . . I feel that I have now come to the utmost leaf of the bulb and that shortly the flower must fall to the mold.

Melville can be called a New Englander largely by virtue of his descent and his residence in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts during the writing of his great book and afterward. He was born in New York and before he was twenty had shipped before the mast. On a voyage to the South Seas he deserted the ship and lived among the cannibal Typees on one of the Marquesa Islands in the South Pacific. Further escapes, mutiny, arrest, plantation work, various wanderings in the Orient, packed three years with adventure and supplied material for several books in which the autobiographical and the fictitious are hard to untangle from each other. The best of these is *Typee*, in which he regrets that the unspoiled primitive life of these islands was beginning to be changed by tourists, salesmen, and missionaries.

Finally Melville decided to write a more serious work of fiction, and *Moby Dick* (1851) was the result. It is the story of Captain Ahab's relentless pursuit of the great white whale which time and again has destroyed boats and men. In the last desperate conflict *Moby Dick*, apparently caught with harpoons and lines, turns again and sinks Ahab's ship with all its crew except the man who tells the tale. The book abounds in magnificent descriptions of the turmoil of the sea, and is our finest record of the old whaling days. Though the author said that he intended no allegory, the suggested combat of man against fate and the forces of nature gives the book a significance even beyond its powerful realism. It is one of our great American novels.

##### 5. *Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, and the Historians — Brahmins of Boston*

To come from Concord and its writers to Boston and Cambridge and their writers is to step from sunny meadows into book-lined studies. When we think of Concord, we remember Thoreau and his hut by

Walden Pond; when we think of Boston, we remember Holmes's sparkling conversation over the dinner table and the light burning late at night in Prescott's study.

Within certain limits this contrast tells us the difference between the literature which came out of Concord and that which came out of Boston and Cambridge. The writings of Longfellow, Holmes, Lowell, and the three great historians — Prescott, Motley, and Parkman — smell a little of the book. These men never felt so close to nature and to life as did Thoreau and Emerson. They never gave themselves up so completely to a reliance on their instincts. They were never so liberal — even radical — in their thought. They belonged to the upper class of society, called by Holmes the Brahmins, from the Brahmin caste of India. Those later critics who do not like restraint and academic culture and social aristocracy have used the terms Boston Brahmins and the Genteel Tradition in a belittling sense.

Yet this does not tell the whole story. Longfellow and Lowell loved sunny meadows, too, though they never saw in them quite what the transcendentalists saw. They often wrote about people in humble life, though they saw them through the eyes of urban gentlemen. If they did tend to talk by the book, we must not forget that Emerson himself mentioned books ("the mind of the past") along with nature and action as the three fields of the American scholar. It was in the realm of books that this group of men rendered real service to a young nation. Here they, too, were adventurers and discoverers. Probably no other authors have done so much by translating and interpreting to bring the literatures of Europe to America as have Longfellow and Lowell. The historians preserved for posterity the early records of the new civilization in the Western Hemisphere. Herein the Brahmins are strongly linked to one of the marked elements of European romanticism, an interest in the distant past and remote lands. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that their eyes were always turned toward an old or faraway land. Like groups previously discussed in this chapter, the Boston writers participated in the literary declaration of independence by their repeated use of American themes and types. Most of their writings that have survived today mark them as indigenous Americans, not just transplanted European scholars. Lowell was particularly vocal on the subject of national self-respect in his essay "On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners." Whereas Emerson had sounded a call to battle in "The American Scholar," written thirty-two years earlier, Lowell now justified the American point of view with suavity and wit.

There is a curious similarity in the careers of the three poets, Longfellow, Holmes, and Lowell. All of them lived, at least during part of their lives, in Cambridge and were Harvard professors for many years. Two of them were Harvard graduates (Longfellow went to Bowdoin). All of them studied in Europe, made frequent trips there, and were well versed in European life and literature. All of them stood for culture, painstaking workmanship, careful respectability, wide reading, and scholarship.

**Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.** Though Longfellow was a learned college professor, he was also the most popular poet of his day. Scarcely an American home had not held a copy of one of his books; scarcely a person had not memorized at least one of his poems. Even in Europe his books sold practically as well as Tennyson's. *The Courtship of Miles Standish* sold ten thousand copies in London the day it was published. Longfellow was translated into almost every language. Even today he sells perhaps more than any other American poet and is more widely known. To test yourself try to recall the names of as many of Longfellow's poems as possible. Can you recall as many titles by any other poet? This explains his importance in American literature. He was first of all a popularizer of poetry among a people who had had but little native poetry of excellence. His ideas were easily understood; his lines flowed musically; he conveyed the romantic spirit of the times.

Longfellow's poems fall into three main classes of subject matter. First, there are the everyday themes of home, childhood, and nature. No other American has equaled him as a poet of the sea. His many lyrics on these themes teach simple virtues in simple, easily quotable words. In the second place, he perpetuated the legends of early America, usually through long narrative poems. *The Song of Hiawatha*, though modeled on the meter of the Finnish *Kalevala* and giving a highly romanticized picture of the American Indian, cannot be ignored as the one successful attempt during the nineteenth century to produce an American epic. In several poems Longfellow immortalized early figures of colonial life, such as Paul Revere, Priscilla and John Alden (from whom, by the way, he was descended). *Evangeline* is usually considered the most artistic of his major poems. Its long, slow-moving lines, its rich pictures of nature, and its pathetic situation of young lovers ruthlessly separated to be reunited only in death create the romantic mood in its extreme form. In these first two classes it is evident that Longfellow and Whittier are on the same ground. Longfellow also stepped into Whittier's special preserves by writing a few

poems on the antislavery movement. No New England poet of the day could ignore so obvious an issue. In point of volume, also, these two men were the most prolific poets of their day. It is easy to see why their names are often paired. But when we come to the third class of Longfellow's poetry, the paths of the two diverge. Longfellow, professor of modern languages and literature, could command another whole world beyond Whittier. His *Tales of a Wayside Inn* tap Italian, Spanish, and Scandinavian sources as well as American. Through both translation and original poetry he aroused interest in the Viking hero poems and the folklore of many nations. He excelled as a translator of Dante, the epic poet of medieval Italy.

Since Longfellow's death his poems have declined in popularity with some critics. They find his attitudes too bookish, his moralizing too smug, and his romanticism too sentimental for our age, and prefer the more vigorous style of Emerson and Whitman. Other critics uphold Longfellow as a scholar, a master of metrical forms, an original creator, and a singer of "golden sweetness." But however critics disagree, Longfellow's reputation is secure in the hearts of the people; and his service in educating America to readable, well-wrought, and wholesome poetry is too great to be forgotten.

**Oliver Wendell Holmes.** If Longfellow was the minstrel of the Genteel Tradition, Holmes was its court jester. In some ways he was an anachronism. He might have been more at home among the English wits of the eighteenth century. His greatest genius was conversational. Sparkling, brilliant, witty, his talk tripped from his tongue without apparent effort. His best moments were with a congenial group around a dinner table, and his best books resulted from putting such conversation on paper, as he did in *The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table* (1858), *The Professor at the Breakfast Table* (1859), and *The Poet at the Breakfast Table* (1872).

Holmes could be more than a wit when he wished. He caused a national sensation when he wrote "Old Ironsides" (see page 507), and he taught a serious moral lesson in "The Chambered Nautilus" (see page 514); but his greatest ability lay in painting a whimsical, humorous picture, as in "My Aunt" (see page 508) and "The One-Hoss Shay," or in writing clever "occasional" poems, at which he had no equal in England or America. Holmes could always be counted on for class reunions or other occasions which needed good-humored celebration in verse. Holmes's wit was in no small degree responsible for the early success of the *Atlantic Monthly*. When Lowell became the first editor of that magazine in 1857, he took the position

only upon the condition that Holmes should contribute regularly. The result was the Breakfast Table series.

Besides poems and essays Holmes also wrote several novels, which show the imprint of his medical knowledge. *Elsie Venner* is the best known of these studies in heredity. Today they are read as curiosities, if at all. Even the Breakfast Table essays have become harder reading as time goes on. To live as great humor a book must be closely tied to universal values of human life as *Don Quixote* is. Holmes's humor, consisting mostly of witty conversation, derived most of its charm from the personality of the author. Now that Holmes is dead we cannot read into his books all the charm of the man. As a result, his reputation has somewhat diminished.

**James Russell Lowell.** Lowell was first of all a critic. We must not forget that he was also a considerable poet; but even his poetry was sometimes concerned with literary judgment, as in "A Fable for Critics" (see page 519). Then, too, in his short lyrics on nature and on personal subjects his style seems more studied, more critically appraised, and less spontaneous than that of his contemporaries. His writings bear on the public questions of the day more than do those of the other authors in this chapter — not on antislavery to the extent of Whittier's, but on questions of politics and foreign relations as befitting an ambassador to European courts. Nor were these always solemn discussions, for Lowell had his own brand of humor — not the sparkle of Holmes, but a more folksy and chuckling variety, with sometimes cutting satire. He was the first important writer to use dialect, certainly a step worth noting considering its prominence in later writing. *The Biglow Papers* combine these two characteristics when the homespun Hosea Biglow comments on the Mexican War and later the War between the States in pure Yankee twang. On the other hand, the exalted tone and dignified measure of Lowell's "Harvard Commemoration Ode" make it a classic interpretation of the great war that had just been ended.

Lowell's prose essays fill four volumes and cover miscellaneous topics besides the major English and continental authors. There is a marked difference between the two great critics of the Romantic Movement — Poe and Lowell. Poe wrote his best critiques on theory and on American contemporaries. Lowell failed to understand a man like Thoreau and wrote his best essays on the great foreign writers. Poe judged men by a set of standards erected by logical processes. Lowell chose rather to set his subjects beside the great books of the past and see how they compared. Poe showed us the value of

penetrating criticism; Lowell, of broad criticism. Together the two set standards for all later criticism.

Three great historians: Prescott, Motley, Parkman. New England was fortunate in having three men at this time who could write history so well that their books have survived as literature. All three were Massachusetts-born and Harvard-educated. All three of them early selected broad subjects and devoted their lives to them. They resemble the preceding trio not only in their scholarly careers but also in the direction of their efforts toward interpreting the New World. William H. Prescott lived all his life in danger of complete blindness but refused to be swayed from his determination to investigate Spanish history, especially as it bore upon Spain's conquests on this side of the Atlantic. The most famous monuments to his resolution are the vivid pages of *The Conquest of Mexico* (1843) and *The Conquest of Peru* (1847).

Though John Lothrop Motley dealt with Holland, he saw in the little country's defiance of Spain another link in the chain of world attempts to uphold the right of freedom — the English, French, and American revolutions among them. Thus his masterpiece, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1856) helped in the interpretation of our great national experiment.

Francis Parkman was the youngest and greatest of the three. Like Prescott he suffered always from ill health, but did not let that interfere with his ambition. There is inspiration in the thought of these two men toiling desperately against blindness and pain to tell the true story of great chapters in history. Parkman chose a subject as extensive as Prescott's. His first interest in New England border wars and in Indian life led him to make a journey resulting in *The Oregon Trail* (1849), one of the classics of our frontier literature to be discussed in the next chapter. Gradually he came to see his great opportunity, to tell "the whole course of the American conflict between France and England, or in other words the history of the American forest; for this was the light in which I regarded it." His first story of the death struggle between two nations, which drew most of the North American Indians to the warpath, was *The Conspiracy of Pontiac* (1851). Regularly thereafter until his death appeared chapters in the story, a fascinating series ending with *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884) and *A Half Century of Conflict* (1892).

In the treatment of the American Indian, Parkman broke with the Romantic Movement as a whole. Cooper's Indians are "noble savages"; Prescott's Spaniards and Indians are as glamorous as figures



instance, in "The Fall of the House of Usher" the first words suggest the gloom and horror that is to come, and every sentence to follow heightens that effect. The theme, he thought, was of great importance. Some themes were too trivial or too prosaic to produce great writing. His own favorite theme was the death of a beautiful woman, because of the proper balance of beauty and sadness. Again and again he used it for masterly stories and poems.

But perhaps the point that most distinguishes Poe from his contemporaries is his attitude toward beauty and goodness. He was not in the least concerned about morality. He wanted to create beauty, nothing more. When he judged a work of art, he asked, "Is it beautiful?" — never, "Is it good?" or "Is it true?" "Beauty," he might have said with Emerson, "is its own excuse for being." But Emerson was also concerned with truth and duty. Poe was not. He was quite apart from the Puritans, who glorified morality; from the rationalists, who demanded utility; or from a poet like Bryant, who admired a calm and noble life in preparation for a tranquil death. He was at odds with his times and thus his life was made even harder. He railed against the New Englanders — some of them at least — and they snubbed him in return. But almost no other American author has so influenced those who followed him. And if you were to ask more Europeans today who was America's greatest literary genius, nine out of ten would say "Edgar Allan Poe."

Walt Whitman. An amazing list of important books appeared in America between 1850 and 1855. The relative speed with which six of them became famous was, as is often the case, by no means the order of their literary importance. *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was one of the best sellers of all times. *Hiawatha* was a brilliant success. *The Scarlet Letter* was well received. *Walden* sold rather slowly. *Moby Dick* was a long time in meeting appreciative readers. Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* could find scarcely a purchaser. It was a slender volume of twelve poems, which he had rewritten five times and finally printed with his own hand in 1855. Though the book would not sell, Whitman sent copies around to literary men and editors. Most of them were shocked or disgusted. Some of them returned the copies. Others wrote indignant reviews. Only two men of importance saw fit to comment favorably on the book. Is it surprising that they were the men of Concord? Thoreau expressed his pleasure in the poems, and Emerson wrote, "I greet you at the beginning of a great career."

Whitman rewrote the little volume over and over again, publishing always at his own expense, until five editions had appeared. He is-

sued a volume of war poems, *Drum Taps* (1865), and a book of prose, *Democratic Vistas* (1871). Always the result was the same: what little recognition he received was grudgingly given, and England was more willing to buy his books than America. He narrowly escaped the poverty-stricken fate of Poe. He had almost no disciples until after his death. But by the 1890's a strange reversal of the critical verdict took place. This later generation recognized that Whitman had written some of the great poems of American literature; that he had looked forward, whereas most of his contemporaries had looked backward; that he was a prophet for the young writers; and that he stood in a pivotal position in our literature. To explain this surprising change in popular opinion we have to look at his writings.

Why Whitman was unpopular with his contemporaries. *Leaves of Grass* shocked nineteenth-century America, for one reason, because it spoke much more frankly of physical and sex matters than was the custom of the time. New England was no longer Puritan, but it was still restrained by many of the Puritan taboos. One didn't discuss sex, and only doctors and physiologists named certain parts of the body. Consequently, Whitman's poetry was considered indecent. Today we have become accustomed to franker writing, and many readers are inclined to wonder what Whitman's contemporaries found offensive in his work.

In the second place, Whitman's verse was like no verse that had ever appeared in America. In *Leaves of Grass* there was no rhyme. The lines were of unequal lengths. All the little niceties of rhythm and meter about which Longfellow had been careful were forgotten. *Leaves of Grass* looked to the men of Whitman's time very much like prose, and they said so. It was crude and barbarous, and they said that too. But today, when we have become accustomed to free verse, we can readily recognize the rhythms of Whitman's lines and feel their beauty.

In the third place, it must be admitted that Whitman wrote too much and too unevenly. He sandwiched his best poems amidst vastly inferior verse. To appreciate the true ability of the poet, read his best work and omit the inferior.

#### Whitman's letter to America.

Camerado, this is no book;  
Who touches this, touches a man.

Thus Whitman spoke of his own work. Into his writing he put all the full flavor of his untamed, vigorous personality. His work became a

kind of letter to America carrying this advice: The past is dead. Draw from it what you can, but depend on the present. If you want to write, get your inspiration from the common people and the common things of America, for here is now "the fullest poetical nature known to history." Steep yourself in this country. Be proud of your democracy. Be proud to be an American. But at the same time do not forget other and larger relationships. You should be "at one with the universe and feel the harmony of things with man." Test everything you have been told, and "dismiss everything that insults your soul." Finally, be in love with life. Be strong; be vigorous. Don't whine; don't dream. Be proud of your muscles; be proud of your health.

Whitman's doctrine is more like the teaching of Emerson than that of any other American, and he probably learned much of it from Emerson. But he went beyond Emerson, who was at heart an aristocrat and would not have put the common, uneducated man on a pedestal as Whitman did. Emerson believed that the soul was divine, but Whitman believed that the body, too, was divine. All in all, he was too sensuous, too vigorous, too unrestrained for Emerson. The master recognized his pupil, but he was sometimes embarrassed by what his pupil did.

**Reasons for Whitman's later fame.** In one of his poems Whitman wrote:

Poets to come! orators, singers, musicians to come!  
 Not today is to justify me and answer what I am for.  
 But you, a new brood, athletic, continental,  
     greater than before known.  
 Arouse! for you must justify me.

Perhaps no poet has ever uttered a truer prophecy concerning his own fame. Our own day has justified Whitman. Our writers find their subjects in the common things of the country and its people. They have learned to trust themselves, to write frankly; some of them, to love life. Our poets have learned many of their rhythms from his verses. In the twentieth century Whitman has come into his own. He is important, perhaps, even more as an influence than as a poet, but we have come to recognize that there are some superlatively lovely poems among his writings. "O Captain! My Captain!" probably makes the widest general appeal. Perhaps you have not read the longer and more powerful poem on Lincoln, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed." If he had written nothing else but this and

"Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," his fame would be secure. Others of his best poems appear in this book.

As we look back upon his work, we see that he stands at the cross-roads. If Emerson believed in *Man Thinking*, Whitman believed in *Man Doing*. In his insistence upon action, upon real things, upon ordinary life as subject matter, he was pointing the way to the more turbulent world that lay beyond the War between the States, when realism should arise to replace romanticism in literature.

**Emily Dickinson.** Amazing among our nineteenth-century poets is Emily Dickinson. Her entire life was spent in a small Massachusetts town, and her poems were not published until after her death; yet she stands today as one of the greatest women poets of the world. It was really not until our own time that her importance was fully understood. Her poems, timeless and placeless, succinct and penetrating, seem so modern to us that it is hard to think of her as a contemporary of Whittier, Holmes, and Lowell, all of whom died after she did.

Her poetry shows the main influences that bore on her: the Puritanism of her home and the romanticism of her day. She has been called "an Indian-summer flower of romanticism on the Puritan ground of New England," but she is much more than that. The Puritan soil may have supplied the strength which led her in life to renounce personal happiness for an ideal and in poetry to lift and stiffen the spirit by a few pointed phrases. But it could hardly have fostered that blithe spirit who kept the Sabbath by staying home from church listening to the bird chorister in the apple tree (see page 571). She proved to be the despair of the conscientious minister who tried to "convert" her because she could not imagine God as her judge or her enemy. Conviction of sin meant nothing to one whose goodness was as innate and unaffected as that of a wood flower. Romanticism may have given her an intense delight in nature and a grasp of what human love can do to rend or recreate a life. Romanticism, however, did not bless the other New Englanders with that elfin spirit which surprises and tantalizes us throughout Emily Dickinson's poems. Her niece and biographer, Martha Dickinson Bianchi, remarks: "There was a side of her that escaped, as a returning sunbeam to its native sky, leaving mere chairs and tables in their certain spots in the drab pattern of the carpet left below." Nor could romanticism have given her that marvelous clipped style and that freshness of imagery which have made her the inspiration of many modern poets, especially of the imagists; in fact, she might almost have been one of that group

herself. The earlier romanticists loved rolling sentences and elaborated similes. Read such a poem as "To Make a Prairie" (page 570) and ask yourself whether Longfellow could have written it. Or think over the tiny poem "A Word" (page 570). Emily Dickinson makes you supply for yourself the ways in which a word "begins to live that day." Imagine how Lowell, who even branded himself as liking to preach too much, would have handled the same subject.

Another reason that makes Emily Dickinson seem to the world today so much more modern than her contemporaries is the recent publication of her poems. They have not had the chance to become trite through years of quotation. The first volume of her work was published in 1890, four years after her death. Poetry reading was at rather low ebb by that time, following its great vogue in the middle of the century. But gradually as slender volumes of her verse began to come out, her name acquired reputation, culminating with the publication of her supposedly complete poems and her *Life and Letters* in 1924. One hundred and fifty additional poems appeared during 1929, and 1936 saw still another volume. She seems almost like a current writer.

Her field of poetry has certain definite boundary lines. She wrote no long poems. Her normal unit was two, three, or four stanzas. Her metrical forms were the simplest — usually ballad measure. She wrote neither narrative poems nor portraits of specific people, but of the relations between human beings she wrote most tellingly. Soul speaks directly to soul, or to God, or meditates to itself. There is always immediate impact in the poems. We are not told how a person looked, or what he did, or under what circumstances he spoke. Only what is communicated is important. The reader can supply the circumstances. Herein lies part of her greatness. There is no wasted effort, no looseness of expression. Her feeling for words is like that of a painter for colors. Careful choosing and blending make a perfect whole. If you tamper with it at any spot, the entire effect is spoiled. This is the work of a true artist — a genius.

### 7. *Simms, Timrod, Hayne, Lanier — Voices of the South*

With the exception of Poe, all the authors discussed so far in this chapter have been Northerners. Romanticism, one might suppose, would fit the disposition of the descendants of Cavaliers and produce

a large body of typical literature. Yet we have a smaller group of writers to consider in the South than in the North.

Why is that true? For one thing, the South was a rural country of large plantations, and literature does not flourish in the country as in the great population centers. In Boston at this time one might meet in the course of a thirty-minute stroll a dozen of the most important writers, publishers, and artists of America. Or think of the electric atmosphere of Concord. No wonder literature grew there! More important than this, however, was that the South always had more interest in politics than in literature. Look at the list of Southern leaders in the Revolution, headed by Washington and Jefferson, and you will see what sort of men the South was producing. And just at this time the best efforts of the South were enlisted in a serious political and economic problem, becoming more and more dangerous — slavery.

The Charleston writers. For a time, however, the South promised to produce a school of writers around a literary center comparable to Boston or New York. In Charleston gathered a group of talented men who might have produced a noteworthy literature quite different from the product of any other part of the country. The South had never had the Puritan background of the North, and it looked for its inspiration more to England than to New England. We have only a suggestion of what this combination might have produced.

The outstanding member of the Charleston group was William Gilmore Simms (1806-1870). Simms was the Southern James Fenimore Cooper. He became interested in the legends of the Southern Indians and the stories of Revolutionary and frontier days in the South, and he set out to write romantic novels of adventure. The first important one was *The Yemassee* (1835), a heroic story of the vanished nobility of the Indians. This made his name and set his style, just as *The Spy* did for Cooper. He followed this style with the heroic dignity which fitted his purpose. "Modern romance," he explained, "is the substitute which the people of the present day offer for the ancient epic." This was his high goal — a sort of prose epic.

In the years before 1861 Simms came into prosperous circumstances and was able to assist and encourage Southern periodicals and young writers. The best known of these were Henry Timrod and Paul Hamilton Hayne. Hayne published his first volume of poems in 1855; Timrod published his in 1860. Both wrote sensitive, discriminating verse. Hayne became editor of a new Charleston literary

journal. The future looked bright for the Charleston group. And then came the war.

**Effect of the war.** For the South the War between the States came to mean red ruin. Both Timrod and Hayne were at the front, one as a war correspondent, the other as an aide-de-camp. Both of them came out of the war with broken health. Both saw their homes and libraries burned, their fortunes dissipated. Simms's home was in the path of Sherman's march to the sea. He lost his wife and nine of his children, and saw his plantation devastated. Within a few years after the war both Timrod and Simms were dead. Hayne struggled with disease for a few years longer. We shall never know what might have come of the bright promise of this group.

**Sidney Lanier.** Lanier's was the first poetry of high quality to come from the battle-scarred South. The war had left its blight even upon him. Remember that he was the only important poet of the nineteenth-century group who was actually a soldier in the war, and he was almost the only one who completely ignored the war in his poetry. It was as if he wished to erase the whole experience from his memory. One can hardly be surprised at such a wish considering that his experience as a prisoner had ruined his health. He died from tuberculosis at thirty-nine. But into a few troubled years he crowded a great deal of accomplishment as lecturer, poet, and world-famous flutist.

We should remember at least two things about Lanier's verse. First, it was highly musical, as for example in "Song of the Chattahoochee" (see page 581). The lilting measure of his poems was no mere accident. In his *Science of English Verse*, Lanier drew parallels between the rules of musical and literary composition, and showed how the construction of a symphony and a long poem might resemble each other. In fact, one of his long poems is called "The Symphony." Its opening suggests the second point to be remembered about Lanier — the serious content of his poetry.

O Trade! O Trade! would thou wert dead!  
The time needs heart — 'tis tired of head.

He was not afraid to look at contemporary problems, especially at the need for economic improvement in the lives of the poor. Nature and music, he believed, were the two things that could lift man above sordidness. A strong religious tone pervades much of his work.

Lanier wrote more prose than poetry. Besides his critical *Science of English Verse*, he wrote a novel of Southern life called *Tiger Lilies*,

and a series of adaptations of old romances for young people — *The Boy's Froissart*, *The Boy's King Arthur*, and others. But Lanier will live through his poetry, not his prose. The onswEEP of the Chatahoochee, the "glooms of the live oaks," and the climax of dawn breaking over the vast sea marshes of Glynn — these are the things that will be remembered, together with his brave spirit that could write on his deathbed a poem like "Sunrise" and say, "I am strong with the strength of my lord the Sun."

#### SUMMARY

A score of important writers who belong to the great literary tradition which developed during the first half of the nineteenth century are united by two common characteristics: (1) they created an independent literature based on American scene and subject matter; (2) they were a product of the Romantic Movement that swept the world during that half century. Though many of these authors continued to produce almost up to the end of the century, the period may be said to extend only through the War between the States, for new influences began to affect literature after that time.

The New Yorkers, Irving and Cooper, were the first to receive widespread recognition in Europe as well as at home — Irving for essay, story, and biography; Cooper for novel. Hawthorne and Melville were New England novelists whose studies of character in the contest with sin and fate appealed to a more limited group of readers, but they have won permanent recognition of the highest kind. Bryant and Whittier were New England poets, writing of nature, death, simple home life, and, through their newspaper editing, of public affairs. Emerson and Thoreau were prophetic voices of Concord, noted as transcendentalists — which means that they emphasized the life of the spirit and communion with nature as opposed to a more materialistic view of life. In Boston and Cambridge the Brahmin group included Longfellow, poet of childhood, the home, the sea, and the legends of early America; Holmes, wit and writer of occasional poems, clever essays, and "medical" novels; Lowell, scholar, poet, introducer of Yankee dialect, and critic of both literature and public affairs. This group also included three historians — Prescott, Motley, and Parkman — who interpreted America through the history of its early days. In the South a school of writers gathered in Charleston, South Carolina, but too early were scattered by the War between the States. Simms, Timrod, and Hayne did little writing after the war,



but Lanier carried on the romantic spirit for several years in his lyrics of great melodic beauty.

Standing head and shoulders above these writers as creative geniuses were the great trio: Poe, father of the short-story form, master of literary technique, and interpreter of literary values; Whitman, innovator of free verse, exponent of democracy, and far-reaching influence on modern poets; Emily Dickinson, who arrests the mind and imagination with her searching, epigrammatic little masterpieces.

It was a great period in the history of our literature.

#### IN THIS VOLUME

- |                                   |                                      |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Washington Irving                 | Oliver Wendell Holmes                |
| "The Devil and Tom Walker,"       | "On Conversation," from <i>The</i>   |
| a story (60)                      | <i>Autocrat of the Breakfast</i>     |
| Two essays from <i>The Sketch</i> | <i>Table</i> (294)                   |
| <i>Book</i> (267-74)              | Six poems (507-15)                   |
| William Cullen Bryant             | James Russell Lowell                 |
| Three poems (467-72)              | Three poems (517-34) includ-         |
| "Abolition Riots," an editorial   | ing <i>The Vision of Sir Launfal</i> |
| (1036)                            |                                      |
| John Greenleaf Whittier           | Francis Parkman                      |
| Five poems (480-91)               | "The Ogillallah Village," from       |
|                                   | <i>The Oregon Trail</i> (980)        |
| Ralph Waldo Emerson               | Edgar Allan Poe                      |
| "Gifts," an essay (276)           | "The Cask of Amontillado,"           |
| Brief selections from five other  | a story (86)                         |
| essays (280)                      | Six poems (537-49)                   |
| Six poems (474-78)                | Walt Whitman                         |
| Henry David Thoreau               | Ten poems (553-68)                   |
| "Brute Neighbors," from           | Emily Dickinson                      |
| <i>Walden</i> (286)               | Ten poems (569-73)                   |
| Nathaniel Hawthorne               | Henry Timrod                         |
| "The Minister's Black Veil," a    | Two poems (574-76)                   |
| story (72)                        | Paul Hamilton Hayne                  |
| Henry Wadsworth Longfellow        | Three poems (577-80)                 |
| Seven poems (493-505)             | Sidney Lanier                        |
|                                   | Six poems (581-86)                   |

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Explain the meaning of romanticism and how it differs from Puritanism and common sense. Whence did it come to America, and how was it changed or modified in this country?

2. Who was the *first* romantic poet? the first *great* romantic poet following him? Who was the *first* romantic novelist? the first *great* romantic novelist following him? Justify the word "great" for the second name of each pair.

3. How many points can you give to show why Washington Irving has sometimes been called "the father of American literature"? What qualities of the romanticist are conspicuous in his works? What were his favorite literary subjects? Illustrate each by one or more of his books. Contrast the personalities and the writings of Irving and Cooper.

4. Point out resemblances and differences in the careers and favorite subjects for poetry of Bryant and Whittier. Which had the greater finish? the greater fire of style?

5. In what way is Concord unusual among American towns? Explain the meaning of transcendentalism. Who were the two greatest writers representing this movement? Explain as clearly as you can the message that each of these men had for the world, illustrating from his writings.

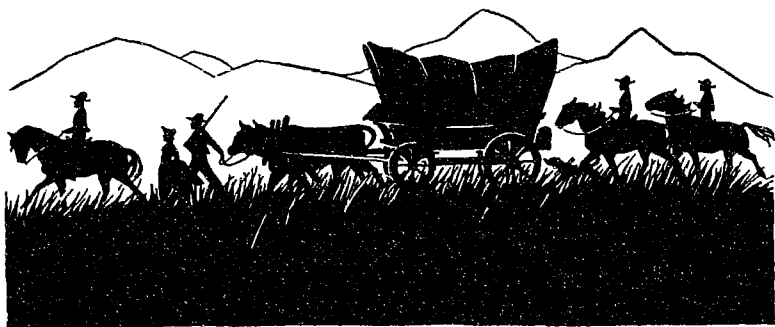
6. What elements in Hawthorne's writings make him one of the most highly regarded American authors? Why has Melville's reputation increased since his death? In what way are these two novelists in sharp contrast to Cooper?

7. What is meant by the term "Brahmin"? Why is it applied to certain writers of Boston and Cambridge? How does this group of writers differ from the transcendentalists? Characterize each of the three poets briefly, showing his chief interests and points of greatest ability. Compare Lowell and Poe as literary critics.

8. Name three great historians of the nineteenth century. Point out notable similarities in their background and their careers. Designate the field of history in which each was especially interested. Why are we justified in including these historians in our "literature"?

9. Justify the statement that Poe, Whitman, and Emily Dickinson are three of our most original geniuses. Why would Poe and Whitman not be in accord with the general trend of New England writing?

10. What city was the literary center of the South before the War between the States? How was it affected by the war? Name the writers who belonged to this city and characterize each briefly. Who was the most important poet of the South, and what did he contribute to the science of English verse? Why did the South have fewer writers than the North during this long period of literary development?



## *Chapter V*

### THE ADVANCING FRONTIER

(1800—1860)

WHEN THE American nation was first established, life in various parts of the territory under the new flag presented a tremendous contrast. Boston was cultured, settled, almost smug in its assumption of intellectual superiority to the rest of the country. New York was a big shipping center, and the beginnings of some of the great American fortunes had been laid by. The Southern states, especially Virginia and the Carolinas, could boast of fine plantations more than a hundred years old, supporting a leisurely and luxurious life. But just back of this well-established seacoast were the Appalachian Mountains with a true frontier type of existence. And beyond the mountain chain were the vast prairies of the Mississippi basin. Even before the American Revolution some hardy pioneers had pushed through the Cumberland Gap to what is now Tennessee and Kentucky. That migration to the West kept up for a century, for the American boundaries for years kept ahead of the stream of settlers — first the Mississippi, then the Rockies and the Sabine, finally the Rio Grande and the broad Pacific. By 1853 the United States had attained its physical growth; and even though the settling of the vast area was only half accomplished before the War between the States, no more unexplored mysteries beckoned the adventurous spirits to the West.

Keep in mind a picture of American life during the years from 1800 to 1860 existing in three waves — first the explorers and trappers, feeling their way through wildernesses where none but the In-

dians had ever been before; then the settlers taking possession of land and building homes, but still living the rough, hard life of the true frontier; and back of these established, cultured life. You have seen how the men who lived on the seaboard, where life was just about as comfortable as in Europe, were devoting their energies to developing a truly American culture and literature. Now it is time to take a look at the other two waves rolling westward and at the sort of life that existed on the frontier.

**The frontier adventure.** The most varied and spectacular adventure in American history lay ahead of the westward-pushing pioneers. They piled through the Cumberland Gap into the wooded slopes of the eastern watershed of the great Mississippi basin, contesting their way with the Indians who lay in wait for them in the tangled forests. They pushed on to the edge of the Great Plains, and stood in awe before the vast wind-swept spaces that have always stirred men to compare them to the open sea. Down the rivers they went in great flatboats floating on the current, steered by poling rivermen, "half alligator and half horse." Across the plains they toiled in great wagons, prairie schooners to navigate the grassy sea. They came to the edge of the mighty Rockies — a promised land for the fur trappers, who edged their way into the wilderness ahead of the hardiest explorers. Though the struggle was usually one of white man against red man and wilderness, in the Southwest the American wave swept over and absorbed segments of old Spanish and French civilization. New Orleans and the trans-Mississippi country came by peaceful purchase, Texas by annexation engineered by these same American pioneers, and New Mexico and California as prizes in war. With them came something of the leisurely, pleasure-loving Latin way of life that still flavors the Southwest.

When gold was discovered in fantastic quantities on the western slopes of the Sierras, nearly a hundred thousand Americans poured into California. They made the perilous voyage around Cape Horn, or took the short cut overland by the Isthmus of Panama, or braved the grueling hardships of the Overland Trail by wagon train over the Rockies and the more formidable Sierras. From Missouri great wagon trains laden with calicoes and velvets struggled across the parched Southwestern plain to Santa Fe, returning with fantastic gains in beaver skins, buffalo robes, and gold. On the Mississippi the steamboat days came into their glory. Stirring times those were!

Nor did these Americans pioneer only on land. The forests and prairies were not the only frontier. Eastward from the Atlantic sea-

board rolled another great frontier — the Atlantic ocean. It was almost as uncharted and as mysterious as the wilderness; and it held as many enemies, natural as well as human. The venturesome skipper who found his way across its mighty expanse might come to strange, rich countries, thrilling adventures, unknown people, fortune. American shipping, restricted by England in colonial days, burst its bonds and spread to the farthest seas. Many high-spirited youngsters on the eastern coast found their adventure not in a prairie schooner but on a sailing ship.

**The influence of the frontier on the American Spirit.** Students of American life and character are coming to attribute more and more importance to the part the frontier has played in the development of the American Spirit. What qualities, we may ask, did this century of contact with the frontier develop in the people who kept pushing to the fringes of civilization? First of all, mere survival of the dangers and difficulties of their life built up hardihood and courage and self-reliance. In most of their crises, to falter was to lose the battle and to look for help was vain. With nothing but their own daring, their own physical endurance, their own ingenuity, victory must be won. The frontier developed the spirit of democracy. Many settlers on the Atlantic coast in colonial times brought wealth and position with them, and after the first hardships social classes modeled on those of England promptly appeared. But no rich men, no great scholars and preachers were among those who moved on west in early times. The common man was the one who felt the urge to try another place in the hope of fortune. Back East, democracy was a benevolent theory of rich planters like Thomas Jefferson; on the frontier it became a living reality. A third trait of the frontier, developed in the pioneer settlements, was neighborliness, mutual helpfulness. All the tasks of home and field became easier when a group attacked them. Another trait of the frontier was buoyant optimism. If fortune was discouraging, one could always pull up stakes, move on, and start afresh. The opportunities ahead were unlimited. Intermingled with all the other traits was a new kind of boisterous fun which has come to be called Western humor. Relaxation from strenuous work was found not in delicate wit, but in full-throated, side-shaking laughter. Western humor lacked the refinement of the Eastern variety, but it was shrewd in its estimates of human nature and good-natured in its ridicule of human failings. No pretense or smugness could last long before its attacks.

So the typical frontiersman was hardy, self-reliant, democratic,

neighborly, hopeful, and given to bursts of loud, though far from vacant, laughter. His nature is of great importance in the development of the American Spirit.

**The frontier in literature.** It is easy to see why the kind of literature that belongs among the fine arts had little place in the hard, busy life on the frontier. Like the early settlers along the seaboard, the frontiersmen were fully occupied with more serious affairs. They had their ballads, for men have always had a way of singing when they drop down at evening from even the hardest exertion. Folklore, too, kept up its quiet growth, for familiar tales go well with the flickering light of campfire or cabin fireplace. Some accounts of backwoods life and adventure, like the autobiography of Davy Crockett, caught the flavor of frontier life so vividly that they hold readers fascinated even today. But only a few of the men who have achieved first rank in American letters both knew and wrote of the life of the expanding West or the frontier on the sea.

Washington Irving was one of the first to realize that the romance of the West had literary possibilities. In 1832, when St. Louis was still a frontier outpost, he made a trip through the Mississippi Valley which he described in *A Tour of the Prairies* (1835). Two years later he published *The Adventures of Captain Bonneville*, a narrative based on the unpublished memoirs of a veteran explorer. Though his thin acquaintance with his subject kept these books from reaching the heights of his other writings, they preserved much information and frontier lore, and they have been read more in recent years since the influence of the frontier on American life has been better understood.

Francis Parkman was not an explorer turned writer, but a writer turned explorer. Impelled by his great desire to know accurately the life and spirit he was to deal with in his great history of France and England in North America, he went, not to the settled areas that had been the scene of the early Anglo-French conflict, but on west to the real frontier where life was repeating the circumstances of the earlier struggle. He recounted his adventures among the Indians out in the Dakota country in *The Oregon Trail* (1849), a lasting classic.

Richard Henry Dana found his adventures on the sea. In *Two Years before the Mast* (1840), a stirring account of the hardships and adventures on a voyage around Cape Horn to the California coast, he created another masterpiece that has survived all changes of literary taste from his day to ours.

Another great writer to leave his firsthand account of a phase of life during the early frontier period is Mark Twain. Though his

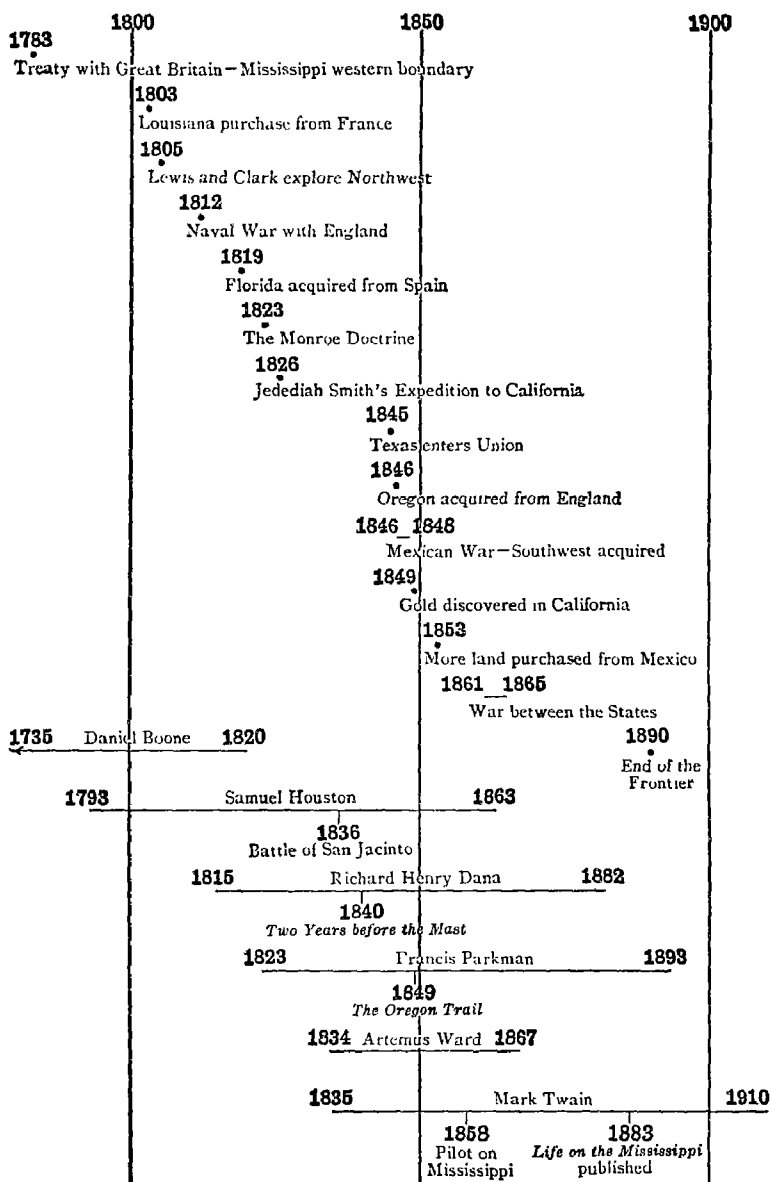
*Life on the Mississippi* was not published until 1883, it deals with his career as a river pilot in the 1850's and gives us the finest picture we have of the boats and the men, as well as the snags and the shifting sand bars, that lent color to the great days of steamboating.

**Journals of early explorers.** Many of the early explorers who mapped the mountains and streams of the West kept journals which are still accounted invaluable sources of information on the early days, even though they are not classed as literature. Whatever they lack of artistic finish they make up in the fascination of their stories. With compass and barometer in one hand and a flintlock rifle in the other, these men plunged into the uncharted wilderness and came back with maps, botanical and geological specimens, and tales of high adventure. Lewis and Clark, who were sent by Thomas Jefferson to explore the Louisiana purchase, headed the first great expedition. Albert Pike explored farther southwest and left his name on the great peak of the southern Rockies that loomed over many days of his journeying. Jedediah Smith discovered the great South Pass in the Rockies over which the Overland Trail was to lead, pushed on across the Great Basin and the scorching Mojave desert, and reached California, the first American to get there by an overland route. John C. Frémont made a more detailed survey of the same region on two later expeditions. His journal enjoyed a brief day as a best seller when the discovery of gold in California made firsthand information about the miles to be spanned intensely interesting to all who felt the urge to pull up and go to the "diggins."

**Western humor.** There had been humor and fun aplenty in the ballads and tall tales that made up the folk literature of the frontier, but Western humor came into its own only with the establishment of newspapers. Almost without exception the great humorists of the period were journalists, what we now call "columnists." Most of them developed fictitious characters to carry on their flow of fun and mockery, and these names — John Phoenix, Petroleum V. Nasby, Artemus Ward, Josh Billings — are far better known than the ones the writers were born with. The "Crackerbox Philosophers," as they were often called, based their wit and wisdom on shrewd common sense and mockery of affectation; and their language was full of folk idioms and homely comparisons, often adorned with strange but ingenious misspelling.

**Modern books about the frontier.** The frontier has always figured large in a certain type of wildly romantic adventure thriller, but writers of our own times have become interested in the true story

# THE EXPANDING FRONTIER





of the frontier. We have many recent books, true narratives or biographies rather than fiction, that have won a larger popular audience than many successful novels. To name all the important authors in the field would be impossible, and the trend is too new for selection of a few for mention to be fair. Two outstanding chroniclers of the early days in the South and West are represented in the selections with this chapter, and they are only two among many of their kind. It is a safe prophecy that many more such books will appear in the next few years to charm a wide reading public and at the same time increase knowledge and understanding of the picturesque days when the frontier was rolling steadily westward.

#### SUMMARY

The far-flung and tremendously varied life of the early frontier left only a few bits of great literature — Parkman's *Oregon Trail*, Dana's *Two Years before the Mast*, Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* — but it was rich in folk literature and in interesting ways of life that furnish material for later writers about the trappers and explorers, the pioneer settlements, the Indians, the French and Spanish background in the Southwest, and steamboat days on the Mississippi. One of its most typically American contributions was the riotous Western humor that became popular all over the nation. The strong influence of the frontier on the American Spirit was in the qualities of hardy self-reliance, daring, neighborliness, democracy, and readiness to laugh at itself as well as at the pretensions of others.

### JOHN COLTER'S RACE FOR LIFE

by STANLEY VESTAL (1887— )

There is no better way to realize what courage and quick-wittedness and endurance were demanded of a man at the farthest edge of the frontier than to follow an actual incident. One of the most famous encounters of the trappers, or "mountain men," was John Colter's foot race with the Indians. Here it is, retold by a man who knows as much about those early days as anyone now living. Stanley Vestal spent his boyhood in western Oklahoma among the tribes who were the antagonists of the first trappers on the rich range of the northern Rockies, and his stepfather knew intimately many of the old chiefs and heard their own versions of such hap-

penings as Colter's brush with the Blackfeet. The boy filled his head with the tales gathered from the Indians; and when he was grown he became a professor of history at the University of Oklahoma and also a writer, combining his knowledge from both the white man's libraries and the Indian's legends to give us some of the richest narratives we have on the early frontier. This account is from *Mountain Men* (1937), a book in which you can get acquainted with all the great heroes and exploits of the trappers and fur traders.

JOHN COLTER caused the mountain men more trouble than any other one man living. For hostile Injuns gave the trappers more trouble than all other things combined, and of all the hostiles on the Missouri the Blackfeet were the worst. That is why Colter may be said to have caused the mountain men so much trouble. He it was who made the Blackfeet hostile!

It happened in this way: Manuel Lisa, that old fox of the fur trade, was burning up with eagerness to trade with the Blackfeet. All traders were, for that matter, because the Blackfeet had a magnificent range, rich in fur and game of all kinds, and utterly unspoiled — since they allowed no white trappers in their country. Lisa had talked with some Blackfeet at his fort at the mouth of the Big Horn, and had found them friendly. He rubbed his greedy hands, and made up his mind to send a man to the Three Forks of the Missouri to fix things up with the chiefs.

John Colter was the best man Lisa had. John Colter was the man to go. And because old Lisa was so greedy, he sent Colter also to the camps of the Crow Nation — then on the Upper Wind River, near Jackson's Hole.

It was five hundred miles to the Crow camp. But Colter, a veteran of the Lewis and Clark expedition, who had already spent several winters trapping on the Upper Missouri, simply filled his shot pouch and powder horn, slung a thirty-pound pack on his shoulders, picked up his long rifle, and hit the trail alone. Five hundred miles was nothing to John Colter. Before he was through, he walked five thousand.

He found the Crows on Wind River, and informed them that Lisa was coming to trade. Then he asked the chiefs to send a man to guide him over the mountains to the headwaters of the Missouri. No white man had ever gone that way before.

That request made the chiefs grunt and stare. They knew that no Crow living was bold enough to venture alone into the country of the hostile Blackfeet. For ages those two tribes had been deadly

enemies. Old Lisa's packs couldn't hold enough vermilion,<sup>1</sup> gunpowder, or butcher knives to pay for a risk like that. They didn't like to admit that, but it was true. And so they merely stared and grunted.

But Colter insisted, and at last, after conferring among themselves, the chiefs agreed to guide him through.

"Good," said Colter. "Who will go with me?"

The oldest chief grinned at the fearless white man. "We *all* go," he said grimly.

Then Colter and a heap of Crows headed west through that wild, rugged country, crossed the Wind River Mountains by Two-gwo-tee Pass and the Teton Range by Teton Pass. That brought them to the Teton Basin, known in old times as Pierre's Hole.

That lovely valley was dangerous country — a battleground of warring tribes. The Blackfeet and their allies, the Gros Ventres of the prairies, claimed the Hole as their hunting grounds. No spot in the mountains held more peril for the mountain men.

One afternoon, as the colorful cavalcade strung down into the broad valley, Colter suddenly halted. Up ahead, behind a clump of sagebrush, he had seen somebody moving. But now that he had halted he saw nothing. There was not a sound to be heard.

Then, suddenly, a man sprang up and tossed a double handful of dust into the air, as an angry buffalo bull paws up the earth before he charges. The wind caught the dust and spread it into a broad tawny banner — the Injun call to battle. At the same moment the war whoop chattered in Colter's ears, raising prickles along his spine: *Wah-ah-ah-ah-ah!*

"Blackfeet!" yelled the Crow chief, pulling the buckskin cover from his fusil.<sup>2</sup>

Blackfeet — or Gros Ventres — they certainly were, and on the warpath! A hundred of them suddenly rose from the ground like magic, and came plunging pell-mell out of the ravine and across the open. On they came at the dead run on their spotted ponies, with motley ornaments and arms, splendid war bonnets of lustrous black-and-white eagle feathers swinging about their heads, half-naked, painted, yelling at the top of their lungs, brandishing their bows and lances.

The Crow chief rode back and forth, yelling at his men. They were all in confusion, stripping off their buffalo robes, jerking the covers from their shields, unlimbering their bows, yelling and singing war

<sup>1</sup> **vermilion**: for use as war paint.    <sup>2</sup> **fusil**: a light flintlock musket.

songs to make their hearts strong. Looking at them, Colter almost wished he had come alone.

He sat still in his saddle. He had no wish to fight the Crows' battles. He had come there to smoke with the Blackfeet.

But already the battle had been joined. The foremost Blackfeet were upon the Crows, charging them confidently with all the advantage of superior numbers, surprise, and the fierce momentum of attack. They circled along the Crow front, waging a hit-and-run warfare, pushing the disorganized Crows back. Every moment the Crows gave ground. Colter found himself out in front, alone.

The Blackfeet charged past him like swallows or swooping hawks. The first to pass tapped him smartly over the head with his bow. The second stung his left leg with an arrow, which passed through, pinning him to his pony's ribs. The horse reared and shook his head, fighting the bit, as the third Injun dashed up and tried to split Colter's skull with a hatchet.

Then Colter went into action. His rifle lay across the pommel of his saddle. Without raising it, he yanked back the hammer, pulled the trigger, and dropped the nearest of his enemies. Then he swung his rifle in one hand and knocked the second from his saddle. The third he caught by his long hair, pulled him backwards across his own horse, and stabbed him in the ear.

That was enough for the Blackfeet. The others sheered off from Colter, and gave him time to gain control of his plunging horse, cut off the shaft of the arrow through his leg, dismount, and reload.

Then the Crows, seeing their lone ally victorious, rallied. And as they swarmed back toward him, Colter threw himself prone, leveled his rifle, and picked off another painted enemy. His third shot killed the Blackfoot chief's horse. At that, the Blackfeet galloped away out of range, the chief hanging on to the tail of one of the Blackfoot ponies.

From that safe distance they made insulting gestures at the Crows and called to them in the Blackfoot language, which Colter understood well enough. "The white man saved you," they jeered. "Wait!" they yelled. "We have friends with guns, too. Stay where you are, and tomorrow we will rub you out to the last man."

The Crows skirmished with the Blackfeet until sundown. Then the Blackfeet rode away.

Colter dressed his wounded leg as best he could. His leg was sore; but his heart was sorer than his leg, for he knew that this chance fight had made his mission a failure. The Blackfeet had seen him,

knew him for a white man, blamed their defeat upon him. Probably they would recognize him if they saw him again. He dared not venture farther into their country after that. His only consolation was that it wasn't his fault.

That night the Crows did not make camp in the Hole. They hit the trail for their camp on Wind River.

Colter protested, but the Crows covered their ears. Their chief said blandly, "You asked us to bring you over the mountains. We have done it. Now we go home." And away they went.

Colter refused to go with them. He remained in the Hole with his wounded leg. But not for long. He mounted, rode on the trail of the Crows until he found a place where he could diverge from it and cover his trail. Then he struck into the pines and rode for Lisa's fort at the mouth of the Big Horn. That unexplored route took him across what is now Yellowstone Park. It was the summer of 1807.

Thus Colter was the first white man to behold the wonders of the Yellowstone, to see the Three Tetons, Pierre's Hole, and the headwaters of Snake River. At last he got back to the fort, where he passed the winter. His leg healed nicely, and he had little to do but grow a beard.

Old Lisa was deeply disappointed. But he could not give up his dream of trade with the Blackfeet. In the spring he ordered Colter to go and visit them again! This time a man named Potts went along.

The two of them made headquarters on the Jefferson Fork of the Missouri and set their traps, waiting for Injuns to show up. They had not long to wait.

Neither of these men was very eager to meet the Blackfeet. They set their traps by night, and took them up again before sunrise. One morning very early the two of them were paddling silently up a small creek on the Jefferson Fork, examining their traps from their canoe. All at once they heard a great noise, as of a herd of horses or buffalo. The banks of the little stream were too high for them to see what caused the racket.

Colter whispered to his comrade, "Injuns. Let's cache!"

"You must be scairt, for sartain," Potts sneered. "Them's buffaloes."

Colter might have argued the matter. But before he could say anything the Indians came in sight, hundreds of them — and on both sides of the creek. They signaled the white men to come ashore.

The trappers had no choice. They paddled to the bank. The

moment the canoe touched the bank, the nearest Indian grabbed Potts's rifle. But Colter, who was a big man and as strong as he was brave, wrested it from the redskin and handed it back to Potts. Colter stepped ashore. But Potts, now thoroughly frightened, stayed in the canoe and shoved off into the water.

That move ended all pretense of friendship. One of the Indians shot an arrow at Potts. The man in the canoe called out, "Colter, I'm wounded!"

"Come on back, you fool!" Colter yelled. "You cain't get away now."

But Potts, losing his head again, raised his rifle, took aim at the mass of Indians, and fired. One of the redskins dropped, dead as a nail. Immediately the air was filled with arrows; and Potts collapsed in the canoe, stuck full of feathered shafts. As Colter said, "He was made a riddle of."

The folly of Potts had put poor Colter in terrible jeopardy. The Indians grabbed him, tore off his clothing, held him fast. Then they began to talk and gesture, arguing as to the method by which he should be put to death. He waited, helpless, naked as a jay bird, while his executioners coolly discussed the method of his slaying.

Most of them favored setting him up as a target for their arrows. But one of the chiefs, wishing to show his authority, differed from the rest. Going up to Colter, he took hold of him by the shoulder, shook him, and demanded to know how fast he could run.

During his stay with the Crows, Colter had made it a point to learn some Blackfoot words. Their language was commonly understood by their neighbors. Colter knew what the chief was saying. He knew that he had a chance to make "the Injun run."

The trapper was a swift runner, and he infinitely preferred a run for his life to being tied up and slowly tortured to death with arrows. Therefore, he cunningly replied that he was a very bad runner. "No good," he answered. "Heap no good."

The chief grinned grimly. Taking Colter from his captors, he led him out on the prairie some three hundred yards from the horde of redskins. Then, turning the white man loose, he said, "Run, then, and save yourself, if you *can*!"

The chief beckoned to his followers. They yelped the war whoop. Colter sprang forward, and ran so fast that he surprised himself.

Before him stretched the open prairie. Beyond it, six miles away, lay the Jefferson Fork. He ran for that, and for three miles he did not look back.

No wonder. The plain was thick with prickly pear, and Colter's feet were bare. Soon the soles of his feet were filled with the spines of the cactus. But Colter did not let that slow him down. He preferred cactus spines to arrows in his body. He ran like a deer. And when he did look back over his shoulder, he took courage. Most of the Indians were far behind. Only one — a long-legged fellow armed with a lance — was nearer than a hundred yards.

For the first time Colter began to hope that he might escape. He put everything he had into the race, and sprinted so hard that a torrent of blood burst from his nostrils and covered his chest and belly. That almost finished him, but he labored on, though he knew that the man with the lance was gaining.

The river was only a mile off now. But suddenly he heard the thud of his enemy's feet coming up behind. Every moment he expected to feel the spearhead strike his naked back. He looked over his shoulder — the warrior was not twenty paces back! He knew that it would not be long now.

Colter was a fighter; he had no intention of being stabbed from behind without a struggle. And so, unarmed, bleeding, and naked as he was, he suddenly stopped, faced about, and spread out his arms.

The warrior, startled at this sudden move and at Colter's body all covered with blood, tried to stop, and raised his lance to strike the white man. But he was tired also, and stumbled as he threw the lance. The point struck the earth and lodged there; the shaft broke in his hand. The Blackfoot went down.

Colter snatched up the lance head, stabbed the redskin before he could get up. Then he ran on. When the foremost Indians reached their dying comrade, they halted; and all at once began to wail and yell.

But Colter, gasping and exhausted as he was, never faltered. He plunged on to the river bottoms, rushed through the fringe of stately cottonwoods, and plunged into the cool waters of the river. The current swept him down, half-fainting.

Not far below lay an island; and about it a great clutter of drift timber had piled up, making a sort of raft above the island. Colter dived under these interlocked logs and, coming to the surface, bumped his head several times upon them. Finally, when his lungs were ready to burst, he managed to find a space among the trunks above water — and rested there, drawing deep breaths in the darkness. His hiding place was covered with small drift, leaves, and sticks — a layer several feet deep.

From that refuge he heard the Blackfeet come running down the bank, screeching like so many devils. All that day they poked about the pile of driftwood. Sometimes he could see them through the chinks of his hiding place. But whenever he thought they might see him, he pulled himself entirely under water. He began to think he had saved his life, until it came to his mind that they might set the wood on fire!

So he remained, torn with anxiety, until at last night came. Then, hearing nothing of the Blackfeet, he dived out from under the ruck of logs, and floated down-river until he thought all danger of discovery was ended. Then he swam ashore, and hurried overland toward Lisa's fort all night.

He was fully seven days' journey from the fort. He was starving, and had no means of killing meat. He was naked and exposed to the rays of the summer sun. His feet were full of spines, swollen and sore. But it was the season when the tipsin ripens, and Colter fed himself on this root as he went along. Somehow or other he reached the fort at last.

Such was John Colter.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What incident shows Colter to be cooler in his judgment than the other trappers? How does his endurance compare with that developed by modern athletes? Do any of his actions here narrated show unusual courage? Which ones?

2. This narrative, like many others of its period, shows that chance played a large part in determining whether the Indians were to be friends or enemies. What chance turned the tide against Colter on two different occasions?

#### *For Ambitious Students*

3. Colter told many tales of the wonders he saw in the Yellowstone Park region, but they were taken for pure tall tales. Look up Yellowstone in an encyclopedia and find out how many years passed before people believed that the geysers and hot springs really existed. Perhaps you will find the nickname the section long bore, harking back to Colter's tales.

4. Many other adventures of the early trappers are recounted in *Mountain Men*. John G. Neihardt has told some of the same stories in *The Song of Hugh Glass* and *The Song of the Three Friends*. Read some from both to see which manner of story-telling you like better.



## THE OGILLALLAH VILLAGE

*from* THE OREGON TRAIL

by FRANCIS PARKMAN (1823-1893)

Most of the early writing about the Indians was colored either by the hostility of those who contended with them on the frontier or by the romantic notions of those who lived at a safe distance from Indian activity. Francis Parkman escaped from both exaggerations. He said of the writing of history that "faithfulness to the truth of history involves far more than research" and that "the narrator must seek to imbue himself with the life and spirit of the times." Because he held such views, he felt that he must find the life and spirit of the seventeenth-century American frontier—the scene of the historical events he planned to record in his great work: *France and England in America*. By moving geographically westward he was able to move historically backward, and in 1846 he found in the broad plateau between Missouri and Dakota the frontier conditions he was seeking. Here he spent most of the summer studying the contradictory character of the American Indian. His account of this adventurous summer is *The Oregon Trail*, the most famous book of American frontier life. The hardships of this summer so enfeebled Parkman that he remained an invalid the rest of his life, and the great history which is his lifework is not only a historical and literary masterpiece but an inspiring triumph of the human will over physical weakness and suffering.

THIS IS hardly the place for portraying the mental features of the Indians. The same picture, slightly changed in shade and coloring, would serve with very few exceptions for all the tribes north of the Mexican territories. But with this similarity in their modes of thought, the tribes of the lake and ocean shores, of the forests and of the plains, differ greatly in their manner of life. Having been domesticated for several weeks among one of the wildest of the hordes that roam over the remote prairies, I had unusual opportunities of observing them and flatter myself that a sketch of the scenes that passed daily before my eyes may not be devoid of interest. They were thorough savages. Neither their manners nor their ideas were in the slightest degree modified by contact with civilization. They knew nothing of the power and real character of the white men, and their children would scream in terror when they saw me. Their religion, superstitions, and prejudices were the same handed down to them from immemorial time. They fought with the weapons that their fathers fought with, and wore the same garments of skins. They

were living representatives of the "stone age"; for though their lances and arrows were tipped with iron procured from the traders, they still used the rude stone mallet of the primeval world.

Great changes are at hand in that region. With the stream of emigration to Oregon and California, the buffalo will dwindle away and the large wandering communities who depend on them for support must be broken and scattered. The Indians will soon be abased by whisky and overawed by military posts; so that within a few years the traveler may pass in tolerable security through their country. Its danger and its charm will have disappeared together.

As soon as Raymond and I discovered the village from the gap in the hills, we were seen in our turn; keen eyes were constantly on the watch. As we rode down upon the plain, the side of the village nearest us was darkened with a crowd of naked figures. Several men came forward to meet us. I could distinguish among them the green blanket of the Frenchman Reynal. When we came up, the ceremony of shaking hands had to be gone through in due form; and then all were eager to know what had become of the rest of my party. I satisfied them on this point and we all moved together toward the village.

"You've missed it," said Reynal; "if you'd been here day before yesterday, you'd have found the whole prairie over yonder black with buffalo as far as you could see. There were no cows, though; nothing but bulls. We made a 'surround' every day till yesterday. See the village there; don't that look like good living?"

In fact, I could see, even at that distance, long cords stretched from lodge to lodge, over which the meat, cut by the squaws into thin sheets, was hanging to dry in the sun. I noticed, too, that the village was somewhat smaller than when I had last seen it, and I asked Reynal the cause. He said that old Le Borgne had felt too weak to pass over the mountains, and so had remained behind with all his relations, including Mahto-Tatonka and his brothers. The Whirlwind, too, had been unwilling to come so far, because, as Reynal said, he was afraid. Only half a dozen lodges had adhered to him, the main body of the village setting their chief's authority at naught and taking the course most agreeable to their inclinations.

"What chiefs are there in the village now?" asked I.

"Well," said Reynal, "there's old Red Water, and the Eagle Feather, and the Big Crow, and the Mad Wolf, and the Panther, and the White Shield, and — what's his name? — the half-breed Shienne."

By this time we were close to the village, and I observed that, while the greater part of the lodges were very large and neat in their appearance, there was at one side a cluster of squalid, miserable huts. I looked toward them, and made some remark about their wretched appearance. But I was touching upon delicate ground.

"My squaw's relations live in those lodges," said Reynal, very warmly; "and there isn't a better set in the whole village."

"Are there any chiefs among them?"

"Chiefs?" said Reynal. "Yes, plenty!"

"What are their names?"

"Their names? Why, there's the Arrow Head. If he isn't a chief, he ought to be one. And there's the Hail Storm. He's nothing but a boy, to be sure; but he's bound to be a chief one of these days."

Just then we passed between two of the lodges, and entered the great area of the village. Superb, naked figures stood silently gazing on us.

"Where's the Bad Wound's lodge?" said I to Reynal.

"There you've missed it again! The Bad Wound is away with the Whirlwind. If you could have found him here, and gone to live in his lodge, he would have treated you better than any man in the village. But there's the Big Crow's lodge yonder, next to old Red Water's. He's a good Indian for the whites, and I advise you to go and live with him."

"Are there many squaws and children in his lodge?" said I.

"No; only one squaw and two or three children. He keeps the rest in a separate lodge by themselves."

So, still followed by a crowd of Indians, Raymond and I rode up to the entrance of Big Crow's lodge. A squaw came out immediately and took our horses. I put aside the leather flap that covered the low opening and, stooping, entered the Big Crow's dwelling. There I could see the chief in the dim light, seated at one side on a pile of buffalo robes. He greeted me with a guttural "How, colà!" I requested Reynal to tell him that Raymond and I were come to live with him. The Big Crow gave another low exclamation. The announcement may seem intrusive, but, in fact, every Indian in the village would have deemed himself honored that white men should give such preference to his hospitality.

The squaw spread a buffalo robe for us in the guest's place at the head of the lodge. Our saddles were brought in, and scarcely were we seated upon them before the place was thronged with Indians, crowding to see us. The Big Crow produced his pipe and filled it

with a mixture of tobacco and *shongsasha*, or red willow bark. Round and round it passed, and a lively conversation went forward. Meanwhile a squaw placed before the two guests a wooden bowl of boiled buffalo meat; but unhappily this was not the only banquet destined to be inflicted on us. One after another, boys and young squaws thrust their heads in at the opening, to invite us to various feasts in different parts of the village. For half an hour or more we were actively engaged in passing from lodge to lodge, tasting in each of the bowl of meat set before us and inhaling a whiff or two from our entertainer's pipe. A thunderstorm that had been threatening for some time now began in good earnest. We crossed over to Reynal's lodge, though it hardly deserved the name, for it consisted only of a few old buffalo robes, supported on poles, and was quite open on one side. Here we sat down, and the Indians gathered round us.

"What is it," said I, "that makes the thunder?"

"It's my belief," said Reynal, "that it's a big stone rolling over the sky."

"Very likely," I replied; "but I want to know what the Indians think about it."

So he interpreted my question, which produced some debate. There was a difference of opinion. At last old Mene-Seela, or Red Water, who sat by himself at one side, looked up with his withered face and said he had always known what the thunder was. It was a great black bird; and once he had seen it, in a dream, swooping down from the Black Hills, with its loud roaring wings; and when it flapped them over a lake, they struck lightning from the water.

"The thunder is bad," said another old man, who sat muffled in his buffalo robe; "he killed my brother last summer."

Reynal, at my request, asked for an explanation; but the old man remained doggedly silent and would not look up. Some time after, I learned how the accident occurred. The man who was killed belonged to an association which, among other mystic functions, claimed the exclusive power and privilege of fighting the thunder. Whenever a storm which they wished to avert was threatening, the thunder fighters would take their bows and arrows, their guns, their magic drum, and a sort of whistle made out of the wing bone of the war eagle, and, thus equipped, run out and fire at the rising cloud—whooping, yelling, whistling, and beating their drum, to frighten it down again. One afternoon, a heavy black cloud was coming up; and they repaired to the top of a hill, where they brought all their magic artillery into play against it. But the undaunted thunder,

refusing to be terrified, darted out a bright flash, which struck one of the party dead as he was in the very act of shaking his long iron-pointed lance against it. The rest scattered and ran yelling in an ecstasy of superstitious terror back to their lodges.

The lodge of my host Kongra-Tonga, or the Big Crow, presented a picturesque spectacle that evening. A score or more of Indians were seated around it in a circle, their dark naked forms just visible by the dull light of the smoldering fire in the middle. The pipe glowed brightly in the gloom as it passed from hand to hand. Then a squaw would drop a piece of buffalo fat on the dull embers. Instantly a bright flame would leap up, darting its light to the very apex of the tall conical structure, where the tops of the slender poles that supported the covering of hide were gathered together. It gilded the features of the Indians, as with animated gestures they sat around it, telling their endless stories of war and hunting, and displayed rude garments of skins that hung around the lodge; the bow, quiver, and lance, suspended over the resting place of the chief, and the rifles and powder horns of the two white guests. For a moment all would be bright as day; then the flames would die out, fitful flashes from the embers would illumine the lodge and then leave it in darkness. Then the light would wholly fade, and the lodge and all within it be involved again in obscurity.

As I left the lodge next morning, I was saluted by howling and yelping all around the village; and half its canine population rushed forth to the attack. Being as cowardly as they were clamorous, they kept jumping about me at the distance of a few yards, only one little cur, about ten inches long, having spirit enough to make a direct assault. He dashed valiantly at the leather tassel which in the Dah-cotah fashion was trailing behind the heel of my moccasin, and kept his hold, growling and snarling all the while, though every step I made almost jerked him over on his back. As I knew that the eyes of the whole village were on the watch to see if I showed any sign of fear, I walked forward without looking to the right or left, surrounded wherever I went by this magic circle of dogs. When I came to Reynal's lodge I sat down by it, on which the dogs dispersed, growling, to their respective quarters. Only one large white one remained, running about before me and showing his teeth. I called him, but he only growled the more. I looked at him well. He was fat and sleek; just such a dog as I wanted. "My friend," thought I, "you shall pay for this! I will have you eaten this very morning!"

I intended that day to give the Indians a feast, by way of con-

veying a favorable impression of my character and dignity; and a white dog is the dish which the customs of the Dahcotah prescribe for all occasions of formality and importance. I consulted Reynal: he soon discovered that an old woman in the next lodge was owner of the white dog. I took a gaudy cotton handkerchief, and, laying it on the ground, arranged some vermilion, beads, and other trinkets upon it. Then the old squaw was summoned. I pointed to the dog and to the handkerchief. She gave a scream of delight, snatched up the prize, and vanished with it into her lodge. For a few more trifles I engaged the services of two other squaws, each of whom took the white dog by one of his paws and led him away behind the lodges. Having killed him, they threw him into a fire to singe; then chopped him up and put him into two large kettles to boil. Meanwhile I told Raymond to fry in buffalo fat what little flour we had left, and also to make a kettle of tea as an additional luxury.

The Big Crow's squaw was briskly at work sweeping out the lodge for the approaching festivity. I confided to my host himself the task of inviting the guests, thinking that I might thereby shift from my own shoulders the odium of neglect and oversight.

When feasting is in question, one hour of the day serves an Indian as well as another. My entertainment came off at about eleven o'clock. At that hour Reynal and Raymond walked across the area of the village, to the admiration of the inhabitants, carrying the two kettles of dog meat slung on a pole between them. These they placed in the center of the lodge, and then went back for the bread and the tea. Meanwhile I had put on a pair of brilliant moccasins, and substituted for my old buckskin frock a coat which I had brought with me in view of such public occasions. I also made careful use of the razor, an operation which no man will neglect who desires to gain the good opinion of Indians. Thus attired, I seated myself between Reynal and Raymond at the head of the lodge. Only a few minutes elapsed before all the guests had come in and were seated on the ground, wedged together in a close circle. Each brought with him a wooden bowl to hold his share of the repast. When all were assembled, two of the officials called "soldiers" by the white men came forward with ladles made of the horn of the Rocky Mountain sheep and began to distribute the feast, assigning a double share to old men and chiefs. The dog vanished with astonishing celerity, and each guest turned his dish bottom upward to show that all was gone. Then the bread was distributed in its turn, and finally the tea. As the "soldiers" poured it out into the same wooden bowls that had

served for the substantial part of the meal, I thought it had a particularly curious and uninviting color.

"Oh," said Reynal, "there was not tea enough, so I stirred some soot in the kettle to make it look strong."

Fortunately an Indian's palate is not very discriminating. The tea was well sweetened, and that was all they cared for.

Now, the feast being over, the time for speechmaking was come. The Big Crow produced a flat piece of wood on which he cut up tobacco and *shongsasha*, and mixed them in due proportions. The pipes were filled and passed from hand to hand around the company. Then I began my speech, each sentence being interpreted by Reynal as I went on, and echoed by the whole audience with the usual exclamations of assent and approval. As nearly as I can recollect, it was as follows:

"I had come," I told them, "from a country so far distant, that at the rate they travel they could not reach it in a year."

"How! how! "

"There the Meneaska were more numerous than the blades of grass on the prairie. The squaws were far more beautiful than any they had ever seen, and all the men were brave warriors."

"How! how! how! "

I was assailed by twinges of conscience as I uttered these last words. But I recovered myself and began again.

"While I was living in the Meneaska lodges, I had heard of the Ogillallah, how great and brave a nation they were, how they loved the whites, and how well they could hunt the buffalo and strike their enemies. I resolved to come and see if all that I heard was true."

"How! how! how! how! "

"As I had come on horseback through the mountains, I had been able to bring them only a very few presents."

"How! "

"But I had enough tobacco to give them all a small piece. They might smoke it and see how much better it was than the tobacco which they got from the traders."

"How! how! how! "

"I had plenty of powder, lead, knives, and tobacco at Fort Laramie. These I was anxious to give them; and if any of them should come to the fort before I went away, I would make them handsome presents."

"How! how! how! how! "

Raymond then cut up and distributed among them two or three

pounds of tobacco, and old Mene-Seela began to make a reply. It was long, but the following was the pith of it.

"He had always loved the whites. They were the wisest people on earth. He believed they could do anything, and he was always glad when any of them came to live in Ogillallah lodges. It was true I had not made them many presents, but the reason of it was plain. It was clear that I liked them, or I never should have come so far to find their village."

Several other speeches of similar import followed, and then, this more serious matter being disposed of, there was an interval of smoking, laughing, and conversation. Old Mene-Seela suddenly interrupted it with a loud voice:

"Now is a good time," he said, "when all the old men and chiefs are here together, to decide what the people shall do. We came over the mountains to make our lodges for next year. Our old ones are good for nothing; they are rotten and worn out. But we have been disappointed. We have killed buffalo bulls enough, but we have found no herds of cows, and the skins of bulls are too thick and heavy for our squaws to make lodges of. There must be plenty of cows about the Medicine Bow Mountain. We ought to go there. To be sure, it is farther westward than we have ever been before; and perhaps the Snakes will attack us, for those hunting grounds belong to them. But we must have new lodges at any rate; our old ones will not serve for another year. We ought not to be afraid of the Snakes. Our warriors are brave, and they are all ready for war. Besides, we have three white men with their rifles to help us! "

This speech produced a good deal of debate. As Reynal did not interpret what was said, I could only judge of the meaning by the features and gestures of the speakers. At the end of it, however, the greater number seemed to have fallen in with Mene-Seela's opinion. A short silence followed; and then the old man struck up a discordant chant, which I was told was a song of thanks for the entertainment I had given them.

"Now," said he, "let us go and give the white men a chance to breathe."

So the company all dispersed into the open air; and for some time the old chief was walking round the village, singing his song in praise of the feast, after the custom of the nation.

At last the day drew to a close; and as the sun went down, the horses came trooping from the surrounding plains to be picketed before the dwellings of the respective masters. Soon within the great



circle of lodges appeared another concentric circle of restless horses; and here and there fires glowed and flickered amid the gloom, on the dusky figures around them. I went over and sat by the lodge of Reynal. The Eagle Feather, who was a son of Mene-Seela and brother of my host the Big Crow, was seated there already; and I asked him if the village would move in the morning. He shook his head, and said that nobody could tell; for since old Mahto-Tatonka had died, the people had been like children that did not know their own minds. They were no better than a body without a head. So I, as well as the Indians themselves, fell asleep that night without knowing whether we should set out in the morning toward the country of the Snakes.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What characteristics of the Indian do you discover in this account?
2. How do Parkman's Indians differ from Cooper's? Which do you think come nearer to being a true characterization?
3. What other Indian superstitions besides the one about thunder do you know? What other explanations of thunder and lightning can you recall? (Remember Rip Van Winkle!)
4. To what extent do you think the white man was justified in taking the American continent away from the Indian as he did? Do you consider any portions of the world still so lacking in civilization that the more civilized nations would be justified in seizing them?

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

5. Whatever Parkman may have liked about his life with the Indians, his ears seem to have suffered. He found their voices *guttural* (page 982), coming from deep in the throat and, therefore, harsh. And he found their chants *discordant* (page 987), out of harmony and rasping. The very sound of the word *guttural* suggests its meaning. Can you think of other words for human sounds which similarly imitate the sounds they name? Try to think of some which are discordant.

#### *For Ambitious Students*

6. Another white man who often lived with the Indians was Kit Carson, the great Scout. Read Stanley Vestal's *Kit Carson* and discover how the experiences and attitudes of the scout differed from those of the writer.

*Indian Folk Literature*

SONG OF THE HORSE<sup>1</sup>

NAVAJO INDIAN SONG

Translated by Natalie Curtis Burlin

In the songs of the American Indians, vivid characterizations of the gods who represent the powers of nature are a prevailing element. The "Song of the Horse" is a hymn of praise to the Turquoise Horse, which the Sun God rides across the sky on fair days when the sky is blue. The "precious hides" on which he stands are the clouds. Each detail in the song adds to the metaphor.

How joyous his neigh!  
 Lo, the Turquoise Horse of Johano-ai,  
 How joyous his neigh,  
 There on precious hides outspread standeth he;  
 How joyous his neigh, 5  
 There on tips of fair fresh flowers feedeth he;  
 How joyous his neigh,  
 There of mingled waters holy drinketh he;  
 How joyous his neigh,  
 There he spurneth dust of glittering grains; 10  
 How joyous his neigh,  
 There in midst of sacred pollen hidden, all hidden he;  
 How joyous his neigh,  
 There his offspring many grow and thrive for evermore;  
 How joyous his neigh! 15

## THE SHARPENED LEG

Although most of the stories prevalent among the American Indians are either religious or heroic, there are a number that at least verge on the humorous. Among these tales of tricksters "The Sharpened Leg" is a good example of those that involve the outwitting or the undoing of "White Man." This legend came from the Cheyenne Indians.

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission from *The Indians' Book* by Natalie Curtis; copyright, 1907, by Natalie Curtis; copyright, 1923, by Paul Burlin; published by Harper & Brothers

THERE WAS a man whose leg was pointed, so that by running and jumping against trees he could stick in them. By saying "naiwat-outawa," he brought himself back to the ground. On a hot day he would stick himself against a tree for greater shade and coolness. However, he could not do this trick more than four times. Once while he was doing this, White Man came to him, crying, and said, "Brother, sharpen my leg!" The man replied, "That is not very hard. I can sharpen your leg." White Man stood on a large log, and the other, with an ax, sharpened his leg, telling him to hold still bravely. The pain caused the tears to come from his eyes.

When the man had sharpened his leg, he told him to do the trick only four times a day and to keep count in order not to exceed this number. White Man went down toward the river, singing. Near the bank was a large tree; toward this he ran, then jumped and stuck in it. Then he called himself back to the ground. Again he jumped, this time against another tree; but now he counted one, thinking in this way to get the better of the other man. The third time, he counted two. The fourth time, birds and animals stood by; and he was proud to show his ability, and jumped high, and pushed his leg in up to the knee. Then coyotes, wolves, and other animals came to see him; some of them asked how he came to know the trick and begged him to teach it to them, so they could stick to trees at night.

He was still prouder now; and for the fifth time he ran and jumped as high as he could, and half his thigh entered the tree. Then he counted four. Then he called to get to the ground again. But he stuck. He called out all day; he tried to send the animals to the man who had taught him. He was fast in the tree for many days, until he starved to death.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What have you learned about the American Indian from these two selections? Does the Indian's folklore enlarge the understanding you gained from Parkman's account? What elements are added?
2. Read more of the Indian songs in *The Path of the Rainbow*, edited by George Cronin, and see what other powers of nature were personified and addressed by the chants.
3. Charles F. Lummis has collected many Indian tales in his *Pueblo Indian Folk Stories* which will both entertain you and increase your insight into Indian nature. Read some of these and see what traits they show.



*Photos, Culver*

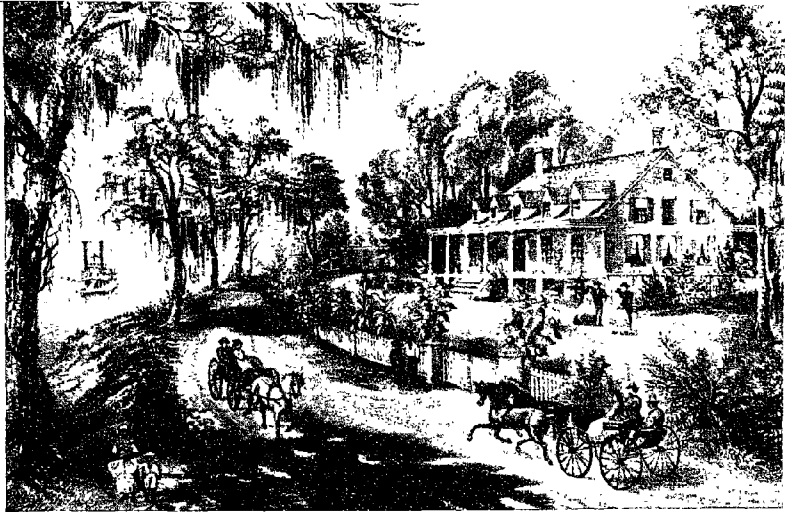
AMERICAN FACES. "What is an American?" Here are the faces of twelve great Americans: men who had a share in building this country, men whose writings or exploits you will find in this book. As you study their faces you may find the answer to the question. See how many you can recognize before looking at their names. (Top row) Captain John Smith, Cotton Mather, Peter Stuyvesant. (Second row) Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, John Adams. (Third row) Daniel Boone, Sam Houston, Mark Twain. (Bottom row) Andrew Carnegie, Thomas A. Edison, Walter Damrosch.



THE CURRIER AND IVES TREASURE HOUSE. From 1835 until after 1900 the Boston publishing house of Currier and Ives issued a series of prints that recorded with amazing thoroughness the varied life of the growing nation. Today these prints are eagerly sought by collectors. They pictured both stirring activities like the rallying of the Revolutionary Minute Men shown above, and typical scenes like the peaceful New England farm below. Whittier's "Snowbound" describes winter life on just such a farm.

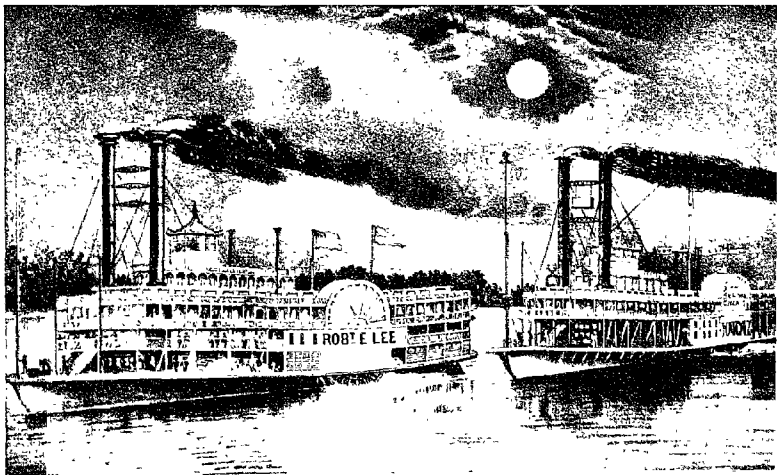
*Photos, Culver*





**LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI.** The golden days of the Mississippi River steamboats chronicled by Mark Twain in *Life on the Mississippi* (page 616) were also recorded by Currier and Ives. "The Great Steamboat Race" (*below*) shows the spectacular contest between the *Robt. E. Lee* and the *Natchez*, two famous luxury boats. The plantation home on the banks of the river (*above*) is probably much like the one in Lyle Saxon's "Crevasse" (page 1173), but the picture fails to show the levee that always protected the homes from Father Mississippi's rampages.

*Photos, Culver*





THE WILD WEST. Old-timers must have hooted at the tactics of the horsemen Currier and Ives showed in hot pursuit of buffalo on the western plains (*above*), but to most of their public the thrills were real enough. Thrills of another sort came from the gold mines on the California coast (*below*), where action was grubby and strenuous, but the reward might be sudden wealth. Perhaps this is Poker Flat and the miners this very evening will expel their undesirable citizens.

*Photos, Culver*



## FABULOUS NEW ORLEANS

by LYLE SAXON (1891- )

The conquering tide of Americans found at the mouth of the Mississippi and in much of the Southwest not a wilderness but old, established settlements of French and Spanish culture. Nowhere was the contrast between raw pioneer life and the older settlements more marked than in New Orleans, which was a gay provincial capital nearly a hundred years old when the Louisiana Purchase brought it under the American flag. This Latin heritage eventually achieved a harmonious blend with the incoming Americans, but it has left its imprint clear on the architecture, the social customs, and the temperament of the Southwest. Here we have a sketch of old Creole New Orleans and of the reception of the Americans, written by a man who has lived in Louisiana nearly all his life and who has found his chief interest in collecting from old records and diaries an extraordinarily complete and vivid knowledge of the olden times in Louisiana. He has caught the glamour and graciousness that are still associated with New Orleans, a city that has never lost its old Creole flavor in all the bustle of modern life.

Lyle Saxon spent most of his boyhood on plantations along the Mississippi River (see page 1173 for an incident from that life) and spent ten years in New Orleans working on the *Times-Picayune* staff. During that time he bought an old house on Royal Street, complete with overhanging balconies, wrought-iron railings, and a charming patio, and devoted himself to restoring its state. Now he divides his time between New York and a cabin on the plantation of a friend in Louisiana, where he does his writing. Among his books are *Father Mississippi* (1927); *Fabulous New Orleans* (1928), from which this selection is taken; *Old Louisiana* (1929); and *Lafitte the Pirate* (1930), a stirring and historically accurate biography of an early Gulf coast buccaneer whose exploits have become the subject of countless legends.

IT IS pleasant to think of New Orleans on a Sunday morning in spring toward the end of the eighteenth century, for it was then like a part of old Spain.

At the convent near the riverbank black-robed nuns are counting their beads in the high-walled garden; others pass with quiet steps over the worn doorsill and climb the dim stairs. One hears the sleepy sound of children's voices droning pious verses in unison, the cooing of pigeons under the eaves, and the click of their red claws on the tiles.

Outside the grilled gateway Negro slaves pass by in the narrow



street on their way to market in the plaza — Negroes black and half-naked, bearing upon their heads baskets piled with purple figs. Silk-clad gentlewomen, with downcast eyes, walk under the sycamores and across the sunburned grass of the Place d'Armes on their way to the church of San Luis. The twin spires are sharp in the clear air; and on the flat roof of the Cabildo<sup>1</sup> next door, yucca is growing in many squat wine jars, the leaves dark and jagged against the sky.

From within the church comes the sound of a priest's voice chanting; and through the arched doorway one can see the sunlight pouring in at a Gothic window, turning the dull stone floor into strips of yellow, red, and blue. A thin priest with black eyes stands motionless, his porcelaneous Spanish hands stretched stiffly into a gesture which accompanies the Mass. The odor of incense is heavy in the air.

Afternoon. An old house, close-shuttered against prying eyes. Within the dim rooms are high-backed chairs covered in dark leather, standing against vermilion brocade and gilded panels. Beyond, in the sunlit court behind the house, an old man dressed in tabbied silk sits writing with a quill at a table in the shadow of an orange tree.

Twilight comes and lanterns are lit in the town. The twanging of guitars comes from the cabarets; a man's voice is heard singing a song of the "toros."<sup>2</sup>

Before long the "zoom-zoom" of the tom-toms is heard in Congo Square, as hour after hour the sweating Negroes dance — a dance as old as Africa itself.

And later still, the sound of singing in the streets as revelers are returning home. Then quiet again, and the voice of the watchman crying out the hours and calling the message that all is well.

Yes, they say it was like this.

On weekdays the clang of hammer on anvil comes from the smithies of the king, as slaves beat out the ironwork for a grill above the door of the Cabildo. The sound of mallet strokes is heard in Royal Street, where mansions are rising to replace the wooden houses destroyed by fire. Brick walls rise, with wooden scaffolding rising beside them; unbroken walls of houses, filling the squares from end to end. Within the courtyards there is the smell of damp plaster, and of cedar and cypress wood. Black hands move to and fro, guiding the clumsy plane; and clean-smelling shavings curl and fall to the ground.

<sup>1</sup> Cabildo: the seat of city government. <sup>2</sup> "toros": bulls, referring to the bull-fights brought in by the Spaniards when they took over Louisiana from the French in 1762.

Smoke is rising above the brickyards, there by the levee. Men are astir.

But from the Calabozo <sup>1</sup> come muffled screams of agony, as Temba the hunter is stretched upon the rack in order that he may be made to confess the murder of his master. Lean Spaniards, wearing brocade and velvet, sit in the council chamber waiting for the slave to tell what he knows. Pain will break his spirit before long. When he confesses, there will be more torture; and at last his head will be stuck up on a pole at the Tchoupitoulas gate.

Near by in the Place d'Armes, Creole children crowd around a puppet show — a marvelous toy which has come from Spain for their amusement. The small figures move their arms and legs stiffly as they dance; and above them the puppet master's fingers dance too, as a youth with limpid eyes plays a gavotte on a sweet-toned violin. A priest comes by, through the checkered shade, looks for a moment at the peep show, and pauses to pat the little boys on their heads. "You like the marionettes, my chickens? That is right, enjoy yourselves, my lambs!"

The marionettes dance, the violin squeals in ecstasy, and the children clap their hands.

From the Calabozo the cries of Temba can be heard no longer.

Perhaps it was like this.

Old-style American histories have a way of conveying the idea that any province acquired by the United States must, necessarily, be overjoyed with such a consummation. As a matter of fact, the day of the transfer of Louisiana to the United States was a day of mourning in New Orleans. And it is easy enough to understand this.

New Orleans was a city which considered itself highly civilized. At the time of the transfer it was nearly a century old, and it was exclusively Spanish and French. The Creoles did not know what to expect of the Americans — and they expected the worst. It must be remembered that New Orleans had taken no part in the American Revolution — unless the exploits of Gálvez <sup>2</sup> might, by some stretch of the imagination, be classed as a struggle for freedom, which of course it was not, but a conquest of British territory for Spain. It must be remembered, too, that in New Orleans the word "American"

<sup>1</sup> Calabozo: jail, origin of the American localism "calaboose." <sup>2</sup> Gálvez: Bernardo Gálvez, distinguished young Spanish Governor of Louisiana at the time of the American Revolution. When France entered the war against England and drew Spain into the conflict, Gálvez seized Pensacola, Florida, and posts high up the Mississippi, thus harassing the British and indirectly aiding the American cause.

was synonymous with "barbarian," and the only Americans with which the Creoles were familiar were the flatboatmen<sup>1</sup> who came down the river with their cargoes. The majority of these flatboatmen were a rough lot, men who boasted that they were "half alligator and half horse"; men who, while in New Orleans, gave endless trouble to the police and to the public in general; men who fought with the city guards, got drunk in the cabarets, and forced themselves into places where they were not wanted; men who spoke an alien tongue and who, with their rough and uncouth manner, seemed barbarous to the Creoles.

This was the general impression. Of course, there had been American visitors whom the Creoles had met and liked; and some of the Creoles had visited American cities. But these were the exceptions. The general feeling was that New Orleans had been handed over to the vandals.

There was, for a time, great hostility between American and Creole. Luckily, the Americans came but slowly to the colony at first and did not mix with the Creoles to any great extent. American women were snubbed by the Creole women, and accordingly the Americans set up a society of their own. They even built themselves a city, eventually, beyond the boundaries of the Vieux Carré.<sup>2</sup> There are traces of this early American city left in the "garden district" of New Orleans, the section some squares above Canal Street. At the time of the American occupation this section came to be known as Faubourg Sainte Marie. The boundary line was the city moat — the great ditch which gave Canal Street its name.

From some of the letters and diaries which I have read, the first Americans found the Creoles somewhat like the definition of the French people in an old history that I was unfortunate enough to study when a child. "The French," my history told me, "are a gay people, fond of dancing and light wines." Even as a child I had a vague suspicion that there must be more than that to be said for the French people. And it may be that the first American families in New Orleans really thought better of the Creoles than that. But it is certain there was a marked hostility — at first, at least.

The thing that the Americans seemed to resent most was a certain pagan spirit in the Creoles; and lest I be misunderstood, let me say quickly that the Creoles are most devout, that they are all good Cath-

<sup>1</sup> flatboatmen: Early commerce on the Mississippi before steamboats came in was limited to huge raftlike "flatboats," which were built and loaded far up the river and floated down to New Orleans — where the boats were abandoned, the crews going back by land to bring down another. <sup>2</sup> Vieux Carré: Old Quarter.

olics, and that they remain so today. By "pagan" I mean something else entirely; I mean that the people of New Orleans seemed to believe in the philosophy: "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow you die." They were a people given to merrymaking and laughter; they liked feast days and fetes. Among themselves they joked continually. They liked to eat, to drink, to dance. They lived luxuriously. And they seemed careless of the morrow.

Now with the two contending forces — snobbishness on the part of the Creole and intolerance on the part of the puritanical Americans — there was immediate discord.

Ah, but wait! Another thing entered in — a thing that took the American unawares. This was the semitropical climate of New Orleans. Louisiana is a fertile land where a living is easily made. It is warm nine months in the year. And there seems to be a certain insidious chemical substance in the atmosphere which tends to destroy puritanism.

The fusion came slowly, but slowly differences were adjusted. Business — a mutual desire to make money — brought the American and the Creole together. The American was shrewder, and usually won in the end; the Creole was better at a bargain perhaps, but he could not match wits with the cold calculation of the Yankee. And gradually the Americans became richer, while the Creoles became poorer.

Well, we all know what happens in that case; and though the shoe pinches, it must be worn. It was not long before the Creole had exchanged his aristocratic name for good American dollars.

There were other things which brought the Creole and the American together, common enemies of both; inundations by the Mississippi, hurricanes, plagues of yellow fever and cholera. And not twelve years after the Louisiana Purchase we find the Creole and the American united on the plains of Chalmette under the leadership of General Andrew Jackson, with Great Britain as the common enemy.

And it was not only the Creoles and the English-speaking citizens of New Orleans who gathered there. With them were companies of lean Kentuckians, men who had come down the river aboard flatboats, each with his rifle in the crook of his arm — men who had come to help protect Creole New Orleans because Louisiana was now a part of their United States. From the streams and bayous of inland Louisiana came the bronzed Acadians<sup>1</sup> to take their places in the line.

<sup>1</sup> **Acadians:** descendants of Evangeline's people, who were transported from Nova Scotia to Louisiana by the British in 1755.

Down the levee from the German coast trudged the descendants of those flaxen-haired pioneers who had come to America a hundred years before. Companies of Negroes — "free men of color" — came bearing arms and took their places quietly, ready to do their part. Surely a strange group of men these were, gathering there under the oaks at Chalmette. But it was a group no longer merely French or Spanish, or a mixture of the two. Here was America! And as Americans they fought, shoulder to shoulder. The British outnumbered the American forces two to one, but the British were defeated with terrible slaughter. It was the last battle of The War of 1812.

Ironically enough, it was a needless battle; for England had capitulated to the United States before the battle was fought on January 8, 1815. Nevertheless, it served a purpose; afterward there was respect at least between American and Creole.

And now, in time of peace, an endless stream of men came swarming down the river and overland to New Orleans. The full force of the westward movement in the United States was sweeping across the continent. Steamboats appeared upon the Mississippi. The population of New Orleans tripled in ten years. Trade boomed. The gaudy days were beginning.

By 1825 New Orleans had reached its most picturesque period. More than a hundred years before, at the time of the city's founding, John Law's followers had described it as a place of tropical luxury. Now, a century later, the same tales were being told again — but the tales were told to Americans now, to men living in New England and along the Atlantic seaboard. And now the stories were true.

For here was, indeed, a strange city — a city that had been first French, then Spanish, and which was now Creole, a blending of both. Here in an atmosphere of the Old World lived rich and cultured men and women; here was a community which was indeed luxurious, with its opera, its theater, music, balls, its gambling, its bull-fights, and its circus; a city of men who inherited the Latin traits of both nations — fiery men who loved pleasure, men who lived for excitement, men who enjoyed any game that stirred the senses.

Opposed to the Creoles were the Americans; for many English-speaking men had come to Louisiana since 1803. It was the marked contrast between them which made New Orleans so picturesque at this time, for the American was as unlike the Creole as red is unlike green. It was many years before red and green blended into a more somber tone.

The streets there were not paved in the middle of the road, but had sidewalks, or "banquettes" as the Creoles say, of brick — narrow walks which clung close to the façades of the brick and plaster houses. In many places "banquettes" were protected from the rain and sun by overhanging balconies railed with wrought iron. Between sidewalk and road were deep ditches at all times. Dirt, trash, sewage was dumped into the drains in front of the houses. These open gutters were cleaned every day by the prisoners from the jails — mostly runaway Negro slaves — who did their work in gangs under the whip guard, Negroes who dragged heavy iron chains after them and who frequently were further loaded with iron collars.

Although nearly every courtyard boasted of a well, the water was unfit to drink; and drinking water was brought from the river and sold in barrels from wagons in the streets. The water was then poured into large jars in the courtyards, and filtered or cleared with alum and charcoal. Many of the courts had long lines of jars, resembling those in which Ali Baba's Forty Thieves lay hidden. From these jars the slaves dipped the drinking water in buckets.

All of the buildings were constructed of brick covered with stucco; the roofs were covered with slate or tile. All houses were built without cellars as the dampness of the ground prohibited underground rooms. One Creole who admired the fine houses he had seen in Philadelphia had an excavation made for a cellar but was forced to fill it up again, as water seeped in and made his house damp.

A steam ferryboat crossed and recrossed the river from the levee beside the French Market. On the opposite shore were shipbuilding yards. And always, just beyond the levee, the Mississippi flowing by on its eternal way.

Steamboats — crude enough as yet; the great floating palaces were to come later — plied from New Orleans to St. Louis, to Louisville, to Pittsburgh. Rapidly they were taking the place of flatboats. But still great numbers of these gigantic rafts floated down the river, bringing their cargoes to the levee at New Orleans. The crews of these flatboats — the rough-and-tumble American male, red of shirt and bronzed of face — lingered on the levee to drink and to fight, to terrorize the Negroes and to get gloriously drunk, there in New Orleans, which they called "The City of Sin." And how they liked this sinful city! And how they scattered their hard-earned dollars in a debauch which lasted but a single night! Then, penniless perhaps, they would strike out again along the overland trail which took them through hundreds of miles of forest and home again. There were some river-

men, of course, who were more prudent and who saved enough money to pay their passage back aboard a steamboat, or returned by keel-boat, slowly and laboriously, up the river. Others took sailing vessels and returned through the river's mouth, up the Atlantic seaboard and to some eastern port.

Outside the old city of the Creoles was the American section, with its shipping offices, the chandlery stores,<sup>1</sup> the warehouses, where the new business between the interior and the overseas markets was transacted by these newcomers. The names above the doors of these establishments were the names which were found on like signs in the ports of the Atlantic coast, for the shipping folk of New England and Baltimore had begun to think of New Orleans as a gateway to the Continent and were quick to seize the opportunity for making a fortune.

A new city was growing up about, and outside, the old walled city of "Nouvelle Orleans" — a bustling, thriving city. And yet, down in those narrow streets of the Vieux Carré, the old life went on as usual. Plantation owners, city tradesmen, notaries, hotelkeepers, lawyers, and priests went on their placid way.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How was life in old New Orleans different not only from the frontier but also from the settlements on the Atlantic seaboard? What pictures of luxurious living does Saxon give you?
2. What differences between Americans and Creoles prevented their getting along well together at first? What common interest brought them together? Do you think it a great pity or rather a good thing that the Battle of New Orleans was fought? Why?

### *For Your Vocabulary*

3. It was a poor beginning for the Creoles to think they had been handed over to *vandals* (page 994), and for the Americans to think that the Creoles were *pagan* (page 994). Both words have rich meaning. The original Vandals were a Germanic tribe who swept down on Rome during the barbarian invasions, destroying much that was fine and beautiful merely because they could not see any value in it. We now call a *vandal* anyone who is similarly guilty of wanton destruction of the beautiful simply because he cannot recognize its value. *Pagan*, too, has developed in meaning. Literally it means only worshiping false gods, but it has become so

<sup>1</sup> **chandlery stores:** handlers of supplies, usually for ships.

firmlly associated with the classic times of Greece and Rome that it has taken on the flavor of the intense joy in life and nature that led the Greeks and Romans to believe in gods of the fields and woods and streams — and to create a god of wine. As contrasted here with Puritanism, it suggests a joy in living in this world, undimmed by fear of a heavy reckoning beyond the grave. To the Americans such an attitude toward life seemed positively unreligious. Early visitors to Santa Fe had the same complaint to make of the lightheartedness of the poor — but devoutly Catholic — inhabitants of that early Spanish town.

### *For Ambitious Students*

4. *Fabulous New Orleans* is richly illustrated with sketches. If possible, have the book in class to show the sketches. If not, find other pictures of old-style New Orleans houses. What details do you recognize from Saxon's description? What characteristics are still used in some modern houses?

5. From this book, or other sources, tell the class some of the interesting old legends of New Orleans. Chapter XXII on the great yellow-fever plague is interesting to compare with the story of Walter Reed on page 328. Describe the famous Mardi Gras.

## JEDEDIAH SMITH EXPLORES THE FAR WEST

by MAURICE S. SULLIVAN (1893-1935)

Notable among the unsung heroes of the early West was Jedediah Smith, a devout and God-fearing young Yankee from New York State who had to his credit by the time he was thirty an impressive list of discoveries and achievements. He landed in St. Louis in 1822, when he was only twenty-three years old, promptly entered the fur trade, worked far up into the Rockies, became a partner in the largest fur-trading firm in St. Louis, and led expeditions farther west than any other American had yet set foot. One of his most important discoveries was of the South Pass over the Rockies in southern Wyoming, the one easy crossing of the great range in a thousand miles of its length. Both the Oregon Trail and the California Trail were to lead over this pass. Canny, fearless, and resourceful, "Old Diah," as his comrades respectfully called him in spite of his youth, led expeditions on across the Great Basin between the Rockies and the Sierras, suffering many hardships in that semiarid land, and, through greater sufferings, over the scorching Mojave Desert and the precipitous Sierras — to reach California, the first American to make the trip by land.



In this selection we have an account of that trip and of California as it was when the Americans first knew it.

After many more adventures on his homeward trip, Jedediah sold out his interest in the fur company at a handsome profit and entered the Santa Fe trade. In 1831, on his first trip with a wagon train, his company lost their way on the perilous *jornada*, a desert strip between the Arkansas and Cimarron rivers. Jedediah went out alone scouting for water and found it, but Comanche Indians found him at the same time and left him dead on the banks of the Cimarron. His death was tragic, not just because of his youth, not just because of the splendid abilities lost to a country that had sore need of them, but because he had ever been one of the kindest and fairest of men in his dealings with the Indians.

This narrative is taken from the biography of Smith written by Maurice Sullivan—who also edited Smith's diaries and journals, first published more than a hundred years after they were written.

ON THE twenty-second of August, 1826, Jedediah Smith and his seventeen men struck out with the cavallard<sup>1</sup> of the Southwest expedition.

Captain Smith, a clean-shaven, sharp-eyed, commanding figure, led the procession into the land of mystery. Single file behind him were his mountain men, each leading one or more horses or mules. Harrison Rogers, like Smith a person of piety, brought up the rear.

The first large encampment of Indians encountered by Captain Smith was that of the Uta Nation at Utah Lake. Proud, equestrian chiefs of a far-roving people greeted Jedediah as a friend and readily made a treaty of alliance with him. With liberality he distributed presents among them; and when he left, the women of the chief men were bright with "foofaraw."<sup>2</sup>

A towering mountain chain on his left and low foothills on the right, southward through rolling hills the pathfinder went—pushing on to the Sevier River.

The Sevier is a peculiar stream in a land of picture-book colors. It rises in high mountains and flows northward between two ranges, brightly tinted with red, yellow, and purple. After long journeying it seems suddenly to tire of the north, turns, breaks westward through the hills, and sets out for the south again.

There were marks of the beaver here; but the time was bad for fur, and Jedediah did not tarry. This was an important new discovery, though, and Jedediah named it Ashley River in honor of the general.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *cavallard*: a cavalcade. <sup>2</sup> "foofaraw": trinkets and finery. <sup>3</sup> *the general*: William H. Ashley, organizer and early head of the Rocky Mountain Fur Company.

Upstream among the bright-colored mountains went Jedediah's cavallard. He traversed numerous meadowlands, but never a sign of buffalo did he find; nor was there any indication that hoofs of any horses save his own had struck this virgin grass.

On the Sevier River, near the branch called San Pete, Captain Smith came upon a nation of Indians, who, he understood, called themselves Sampatch. They were the Sanpets, a tribe related to the Utes but inferior to the bold horsemen of mountain and prairie. Though the summer was scarcely past, they wore robes made of rabbit skins.

The Sanpets were friendly, and Jedediah traded for a little dried rabbit meat and the edible roots which supplied the scanty fare of these natives.

The cavallard crossed the Sevier above the mouth of Clear Creek and here, in a bright red setting, came upon jet boulders evidently sprayed in the dim past from some spouting volcano. Farther on, the canyon of the creek was all of an ashen gray; and there were thousands of cabalistic writings on rocks, not the work of civilized men but of an aboriginal and perhaps unremembered people. Truly this was a mysterious land in which no one could guess what lay before.

At the head of Clear Creek, Captain Smith ascended a mountain range and, coming down on the west side, saw before him, as far as the eye could reach, a desert of sand and barren hills. Here, certainly, there could be little game or peltry.

Onward, nevertheless, he urged his company, until he struck a river which, from the size of its bed, appeared to have been a considerable stream. Now under the blaze of summer heat there were only a few pools of water in its course, and Jedediah named it Lost River — a name which itself has been lost, for on modern maps it is called the Beaver.

On Lost River he saw numerous Indians; but they fled like coyotes at the apparition of strange, bearded humans with four legs, who killed hares by pointing a long stick and making a noise like thunder.

With all the signs of peace at his command, Jedediah tried to approach these wild creatures and make friends; but they hid from him. To prove his pacific intention he left a knife and other attractive presents lying on the ground in the Indian camp.

Across Lost River and still southward down to the Virgin went the cavallard, leaving skeletons of horses behind them. It seemed to

Jedediah a pitiful thing to fire a bullet into the head of a faltering animal, no longer able to carry a pack though willing and wistful to follow its human master; but lack of grass and water had worn the poor beasts down, and lack of game made them a sacrifice, tough and unwholesome, to the men's starvation.

Along the red-walled, shallow Virgin the party traveled, pursuing a southwest course. Jedediah now encountered numerous groups of natives whom he called Pautches.

Fearsome, skulking Indians were the Piutes, though many of them lived within sight of some of the most striking grandeur in creation. From time to time, standing on high places, Jedediah caught glimpses of the marvels of Zion Canyon, cathedral domes and towers glistening in the rarefied air. It was a scene of inspiring sublimity; but here in the valleys of the Virgin and the Santa Clara rivers human beings lived in rounded, brush shelters, more like kennels or lairs than lodges, so poorly made they barely shielded the inhabitants from the fierce beat of the sun. Like the Sanpets, the Piutes wore rabbit-skin robes. Both the fur and their own hairy adornment were homes for myriad vermin, with which the simple natives had a reciprocal arrangement: the lodgers obtained their sustenance from the hides of the Indians, and the Piutes ate their guests.

They had pleasanter, better fare though. On the Santa Clara River Jedediah found growing corn, and he therefore named the stream Corn Creek. There were, too, primitive candy manufactories, with stone vessels in which cane grass was pounded to pulp, then boiled with water until a thick sugar was extracted.

In the bed of the Virgin River, through a deep, narrow gorge with perpendicular walls, Jedediah marched his cavalcade. Gloom and foreboding took possession of the courageous fellows who had enlisted for romance and high adventure. The sinister aspect of this quiet place appalled them. When at last, with infinite toil, they managed the passage of the narrows, they emerged into the worst desert any of them had ever seen.

The young commander urged them on. To the men in file this journey was trifling with death, but to Jedediah Smith it was the pattern of his dream. At night they brooded at the fire, imagined that before them to the edge of the world lay desert, and saw in their mind's eye skeletons of forgotten men bleaching in the sun. Jedediah Smith wrote in his journal, recording with satisfaction places and things of which neither he nor any of his company had ever heard before; and he read his books and knelt often to pray. Too, he gath-

ered souvenirs — a marble pipe, a knife of flint and other curiosities to be sent back to civilization.

Fifty horses and mules when they started. Soon forty-five, then forty, thirty-five, thirty, twenty-nine, twenty-eight . . . they dropped one by one as their feeble strength, taxed with the burdens of other fallen, failed to make the passage of the badlands.

Still Jedediah would not turn back; indeed, even if he wished to return now, an attempt to do so might be fatal unless some means should be found for getting provisions. He promised they should soon come upon a superior Indian nation or a Spanish settlement.

[After six days of hardship they reach a village of Mojave Indians where they are able to get food, rest, and fresh horses.]

With two Indian guides leading the way, Jedediah turned directly to the westward and into a barren country even worse than the one in which they had lost their horses.

This was the white-heart Mojave, the passive protector of the California settlements.

Years before, a war party of Indians, accustomed to travel for days at a time without food and much of the time without water, crossed this desert, descended upon a mission rancho, and ran off a band of horses. But when they tried to drive the animals across that fearsome land, they found the beasts could not endure the waterless journey. Horses withered in the flame of the sun, and thenceforth Californians felt secure in the belief that invasion from the east was impossible.

Into the fire of the Mojave, in the face of the sun, rode the tall young Yankee and his ragged cavalcade.

Mirages mocked them as they traveled sometimes from dawn to dark without finding a spring. The hoofs of their horses broke through the surface at every step as for a whole day they passed over a crust of beautiful white salt, now called Soda Lake, or the Mojave Sink, at the dry mouth of the Mojave River.

A curious river Jedediah found the Mojave. As if to avoid the sucking terror of the sun, it had disappeared into the ground; and only at rare intervals along its course did the explorer find water. Inconstant River is the name he gave it, and Inconstant River it appears on the new maps his discoveries inspired.

The heat at length became unbearable, and the captain ordered holes dug into the sand so that the men might rest and cool their bodies. Refreshed by this device, they pursued their way through

pricking cactus and a sparse forest of fantastic yuccas rising leafless from the grayish sand. They saw no animate thing at which to shoot; hunger allied itself with thirst in grisly attempt to halt this presumptuous violation of the desert barrier. But Jedediah Smith marched on.

He followed the ancient Indian trail along the bend of the dry river until he came to a place where the guides pointed out a gap in the snow-crowned mountains to the southward. The trail led up a steep, cool, pine-grown canyon, through which the white men harried their laboring beasts.

With infinite toil Captain Smith attained the snow-covered summit of the range now called the San Bernardino Mountains. Cold air struck his flesh through the rents in his ragged shirt as he rode aside from the trail to a rocky point from which he could look down into what seemed like a promised land.

Back of him was the seared, barren desert, with delusion dancing in the sun. Before him was a green valley, restfully, lusciously green from early rains, soothing to eyes tortured by fifteen days of maddening brilliance. No mocking mirage, this view. It was unmistakably, vividly real.

To the southeast and the west there were magnificent, white-capped peaks; far to the south, lower mountains. Down in the valley there was a wide, tree-bordered wash, with water running in abundance in its channel and everywhere immense herds of cattle and horses.

His eye traveled westward through the clear November air, following the pointing finger of the younger of the two guides.

"San Gabriel!" said the Indian, indicating that somewhere near the limits of that lovely land was the Spanish settlement of that name.

Jedediah Smith looked far, far away to the horizon. The land ended; there was water, and an island in a vast ocean.

Down into the valley of San Bernardino, in the last week of November, 1826, rode the ragged, half-starved expedition.

A native *vaquero*, amazed at this apparition of men of a strange, white nation descending a ridge of the mountains, galloped into the headquarters of the major-domo, or overseer, at the Indian village of Guachama, ten miles southeast of the pass. From there a messenger rushed with the tidings to Mission San Gabriel, sixty miles to the westward.

As they watered their horses at the foot of the range, Jedediah Smith and his men, according to the habit of hunters, turned to examine the trail for guiding landmarks.

Suddenly someone cried "Look!" and pointed.

High on the side of the mountains was an almost unbelievable thing: an enormous, perfectly shaped arrowhead, outlined in bare rock against the dark background of the chaparral.

Taking the plainly marked road to the westward, he and his hunters kept their rifles ready. "Spanyards" were given a sinister reputation in the one-sided literature of English-speaking people, because it is the way of men, writing of conflict with folk of different manners, customs, and beliefs, to impute much villainy to them.

Through great herds of cattle, sheep, and horses the strange cavalcade made its way along the south side of the San Bernardino and San Gabriel mountains. An Indian, who spoke Spanish, appeared; then soldiers approached on prancing gaily ornamented horses, but there was nothing of menace about them. Instead, they were polite; and seeing the hungry look of Jedediah's men, they killed a fat cow and sent back to the mission for corn meal. Soon there was joyful feasting, and for the first time in many weeks Captain Smith looked upon a contented encampment.

Jedediah rode into San Gabriel with the military commandant, while Harrison Rogers stayed in charge of the company. At the door of the mission the captain was greeted by a pleasant, gray-haired friar, Father José Bernardo Sánchez.

We are indebted to the diary of Harrison Rogers for an account of the reception given the invaders from the East. For more than eighty years this record of Rogers remained hidden, while writers of history, having no facts at hand, told indignantly of the grievous imprisonment of Jedediah Smith by the cruel Spanish.

Mr. S. [the clerk recorded] wrote me a note in the morning, stating that he was received as a gentleman and treated as such. I arrived late in the evening, was received very politely and showed into a room and my arms taken from me. About 10 o'clock at night supper was served, and Mr. S. and myself sent for. I was introduced to the 2 priests over a glass of good old whisky, and found them to be very jovial, friendly gentlemen. The supper consisted of a number of different dishes, served different from any table I ever was at. Plenty of good wine during supper. Before the cloth was removed cigars was introduced.

There was difficulty in conversation until a visitor who knew a little English came from Los Angeles. Now the missionaries expressed their wonder at this journey. They had heard something of the big salt lake far to the northeast. The American captain traveled with horses and goods all the way from St. Louis on the Mississippi River to the salt sea, and from the salt sea to California? This was indeed a marvel.

What was the country like? He drew maps for them. What manner of gentiles<sup>1</sup> lived in this great wilderness? He told them of the Blackfeet, the Snakes, the Crows, the Piutes. What were the laws of the American States? He mentioned those which most impressed him.

Jedediah later wrote that to achieve his purpose he had deprived himself of "the privilege of society and the satisfaction of the converse of friends." These were among the things which the Franciscan padres, men of cultured families, reared in civilized Spain, gave up when they entered the service of the Indians. So now, far from home, they found pleasure in the company of the Methodist Smith and the Calvinist Rogers and let the civil authorities, the Mexicans, worry about the political aspect of the visit.

Jedediah wrote to the Governor of the Department of California, then at San Diego, to the southward, announcing his arrival. Meanwhile he continued to enjoy the hospitality of the mission.

Still at the mansion [wrote Rogers, meaning mission]. We was sent for about sunrise to drink a cup of tea, and eat some bread and cheese. They all appear friendly and treat us well. Although they are Catholics by profession, they allow us liberty of conscience and treat us as they do their own countrymen or brethren.

At dinner "everything went on in style," according to the diarist. Their hosts were merry; and, he recorded, "they all appear to be gentlemen of the first class, both in manners and habits."

There was a grand wedding, then, to which people traveled from settlements many miles away. Smith and Rogers were invited and were made welcome at "an elegant dinner."

The "booshway"<sup>2</sup> and the little "booshway" of the wild mountain men felt somewhat diffident among the leading people of that part of the province. Frankly Rogers admitted he and his commander were very dirty; their clothing was tattered and soiled with the sweat of months; and they "acted quite independent," not knowing the language of the other guests at the table. Their excuses were waved aside, though, and the diners were as courteous to them as if they were clothed in fine garments.

While Smith and Rogers lived with the missionaries, the other members of the expedition had an apartment to themselves, with

<sup>1</sup> **gentiles**: used by Christians to mean heathen. <sup>2</sup> **"booshway"**: usual "mountain" term for the leader of a trapping expedition, the little "booshway" being his lieutenant. The word developed from the French *bourgeois*.

cooking utensils and an abundance of provisions. They were not contented, however, and Captain Smith was obliged to prove that piety is not incompatible with physical prowess.

James Read, a husky blacksmith, was a chronic maker of trouble. His impertinence in the end brought him a flogging from his captain, and for the rest of that day, as Rogers noted, he "appeared more complasant than usual." This same Read, while under the domination of strong waters, later engaged in a fist fight with another member of the party, and further ingratiated himself by invading the dining room during a meal and making himself somewhat objectionable.

In the company of Abraham LaPlant, whose companionship he seems to have favored, Jedediah went down to the pueblo of Los Angeles and there met a certain Francisco Martinez, who promised to provide as many horses and mules as he wished for his journey.

On Sunday, December 6, Mass was at six o'clock in the morning.

They poured into the church from all quarters, men, women and children. There was none of us invited, therefore we all remained at our lodgings. The Indians play bandy [shinny, or field hockey] with sticks, it being the only game I have seen as yet among them. They play before the priest's door. [And, Rogers added] I am told they dance, both Spaniards and Inds., in the course of the evening.

The next day Father Sánchez gave Smith sixty-four yards of material so that he and his men could make shirts for themselves. A couple of days later Rogers made Father Sánchez a present of his buffalo robe — doubtless a great sacrifice on the part of Rogers, considering the condition of the company. The ever-generous padre accepted the gift, but gave in return an unusually large blanket.

Smith in the meantime began to grow impatient because he had received no reply from the Governor of the province. He was having his first experience of the celebrated José María de Echeandía, whose vacillations later drove the American almost to distraction.

Don José considered himself a harassed man even before the problem of Smith, J. S., burst upon him with so little warning.

To begin with, Don José was none too well. He lacked vitality, and the energy of such men as Smith depressed him. When he established his capital at San Diego, because he thought the climate better suited to his poor health, he grievously outraged the feelings of the inhabitants of Monterey.

Further, his excellency was not on the best of terms with the Span-



ish missionaries, who had little liking for the Mexican Republic and the recent revolution. Don José and his political friends had in mind what one historian calls "an enlightened scheme of secularization" for the chain of missions which extended from Lower California northward to San Francisco. This and similar schemes were looked upon by the padres with a non-co-operative eye.

Within the span of a generation the Franciscans had succeeded in Christianizing the Indians of the coast territory. They had found them a multitude of miserable, warring tribes, living on roots, acorns, vermin, and such small game as they could snare or kill. They seemed, as Jedediah Smith remarked of gentile Indians of the north, the connecting link between man and brute creation, rising from their beds of earth, like the animals around them, to eat that day or to go hungry as fortune favored them.

Now they were settled peacefully around the missions, producing by agriculture and stock raising a variety of food, working at the mechanical arts then common among civilized men. Their herds had multiplied, and their improved economic condition caused inland tribes to ask for missions.

When the San Gabriel missionaries questioned Jedediah Smith about the desert country to the eastward, they had in mind their plan for reaching the wild Indians of the interior with another chain of missions. It was their intent that when they had completed the spiritual conquest of the Spanish territory they should organize the Christians into pueblos and allow them to govern themselves.

This was a noble plan; but it did not appeal to the practical men, the politicians. It seemed to them, as their own situation seemed later to the invading Americans, to be much too good for inferior folk. Hence it is that eight years after Smith arrived in California one finds the mission lands and other properties falling into the hands of the "right people," and the Indians either bewildered or returning to savage life.

[A long passage describes Smith's difficulties in obtaining passports from the Governor, his final success, and his return to the mission on January 10.]

Jedediah Smith doubtless was relieved to get away from the Governor, who seemed, according to Smith, to have been placed in power to perplex him and those over whom he was called to govern. Doubtless, too, Echeandía was glad to be rid of Smith, for there is evidence

that Jedediah, despite the danger of imprisonment in a foreign land, was stubbornly determined to do as he pleased.

He acceded, though, to the official refusal to allow him to travel up the seacoast toward the Russian colony at Bodega, above San Francisco. He was ordered to leave the country by a route which would avoid the settlements. In the middle of January the party finally got under way, with sixty-eight horses — some very wild. From the first camping place, four miles from the mission, Smith and Rogers returned to have a farewell supper with Father Sánchez.

"The old Father has given a great deal to Mr. Smith, and some of the men, and continues giving," Rogers had written. Now as the American leader and his clerk were leaving, Father Sánchez presented parting gifts: cheese, a gourdful of brandy, and blankets. Besides, Smith obtained an order on the major-domo at San Bernardino, who was instructed to let him have whatever supplies he might need for his journey. This crowning act of generosity so affected Rogers that he panegyricized:

Old Father Sánchez has been the greatest friend that I ever met with in all my travels. He is worthy of being called a Christian as he possesses charity in the highest degree, and a friend to the poor and distressed. I ever shall hold him as a man of God, taking us in when in distress, feeding and clothing us, and may God prosper him and all such men.

At San Bernardino, Smith and his men killed some cattle and dried the meat. The order on the major-domo was complied with immediately, and they obtained corn, peas, parched meal, and wheat flour.

It was the later part of January, and Rogers observed with satisfaction that the weather still was mild. Doubtless he thought of the trappers in the mountains, or on the Upper Missouri, holed up for the winter or moving about amid ice, snow, and bitter winds. "This country," he wrote, "in many respects is the most desirable part of the world I ever was in; the climate so regular and beautiful. The thermometer stands daily from 65 to 70 degrees."

Back to the desert the little party went about February 1, crossing the mountains north of San Bernardino. Then, ignoring Mexican governors and their absurd objections, Smith continued his exploration of California and its resources.

He took a northwest course, heading toward the Tulare Lake region, where, he had heard, there were beaver. He passed many naked, short-haired Indians, living on fish, acorns, and grass.

Northward from the Spanish *Río de los Santos Reyes* — now King's

River — which Smith named Wim-mul-che because he found a friendly tribe of that name living there, the Americans found good hunting and settin' for their traps.

They followed the San Joaquin, taking beaver from its tributaries. Between the streams now called the Stanislaus and the Mokelumne they encountered friendly and useful natives in the Apelamenes and Mokelumnes, on whom Jedediah bestowed evanescent honor by giving to the Stanislaus and the Calaveras the names Appelamminy and Mackalumbry.

The calm indifference of Captain Smith and his men to the authority of Mexico has its amusing aspect. One wonders what would have happened to a band of Mexicans riding into Missouri on horses stolen from the Missourians, showing by their manner that they were contemptuous of the Missourians; fraternizing with the native enemies of the settlers; renaming the rivers; insisting on choosing their own course through the territory; and, as they went, gathering the natural wealth of the country. Certainly the Missourians would have been less indulgent than the "jealous Spaniard."

In the end this tolerance of invasion lost the magnificent empire of the Pacific slope. Jedediah Smith had opened the gate, and Mexico was never able to close it.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. List some of the hardships Smith and his men encountered on the way to California. Do you think the achievement was worth the suffering?

2. How did the Indians whom Smith encountered on this trip differ from the usual idea of the Indian? What did the land have to do with the way the Indians lived? West of the plains country, what was the chief use the Indians had for horses?

3. What incident first showed that Smith's expedition was to be received kindly by the Californians? What further kindnesses were shown the Americans?

4. What details show that the Californians were used to more luxuries than were the American frontiersmen? Did you notice any evidences of the Spanish love of pleasure?

5. Do you get a clear impression of Jedediah Smith's character from this narrative? What were his most marked traits? You can know Jedediah much better, and also the life along the farthest edge of the frontier, if you read all of the biography from which this selection was taken.

6. Vocabulary: cabalistic, peltry, panegyryzed.

## A LIGHTNING PILOT

*from* LIFE ON THE MISSISSIPPI*by* SAMUEL L. CLEMENS (1835-1910)

From boyhood Samuel L. Clemens (see page 402), better known by his pen name of "Mark Twain," was fascinated by the Mississippi River, which flowed past the sleepy little Missouri town where he grew up. The moment of greatest excitement came when one of the splendid steamboats drew up to the landing, and the most ardent ambition of all the boys was to grow up to be a pilot. The book from which this narrative is taken, *Life on the Mississippi*, was published in 1883; but the events recounted occurred in the late 1850's, when steamboat days were in their glory. Clemens was twenty-two when he fell into conversation with a master pilot, Horace Bixby, on a trip to New Orleans, and finally persuaded him to take him on as apprentice and "teach him the river." For his education he agreed to pay Mr. Bixby five hundred dollars out of his first earnings as a pilot. The sum may not seem too high a price when you read this account of Mr. Bixby in action and realize the quality of training it went for. The ambitious apprentice had already made a trip up the river with his master, jotting down notes on all the minute landmarks a pilot had to know if he was to bring his boat through in safety. An impossible task, a navigator used to open water would have said; but the men who put steamboats on the Mississippi and kept them there until the railroads took away their business were of the breed of the pioneer, and obstacles that would have daunted another merely lent their task greater fascination.

WHEN I returned to the pilothouse St. Louis was gone, and I was lost. Here was a piece of river which was all down in my book, but I could make neither head nor tail of it: you understand, it was turned around. I had seen it when coming upstream, but I had never faced about to see how it looked when it was behind me. My heart broke again, for it was plain that I had got to learn this troublesome river *both ways*.

The pilothouse was full of pilots, going down to "look at the river." What is called the "upper river" (the two hundred miles between St. Louis and Cairo, where the Ohio comes in) was low; and the Mississippi changes its channel so constantly that the pilots used to always find it necessary to run down to Cairo to take a fresh look, when their boats were to lie in port a week; that is, when the water was at a low stage. A deal of this "looking at the river" was done

by poor fellows who seldom had a berth and whose only hope of getting one lay in their being always freshly posted and therefore ready to drop into the shoes of some reputable pilot, for a single trip, on account of such pilot's sudden illness or some other necessity. And a good many of them constantly ran up and down inspecting the river, not because they ever really hoped to get a berth, but because (they being guests of the boat) it was cheaper to "look at the river" than stay ashore and pay board. In time these fellows grew dainty in their tastes, and only infested boats that had an established reputation for setting good tables. All visiting pilots were useful, for they were always ready and willing, winter or summer, night or day, to go out in the yawl and help buoy the channel or assist the boat's pilots in any way they could. They were likewise welcomed because all pilots are tireless talkers, when gathered together, and as they talk only about the river they are always understood and are always interesting. Your true pilot cares nothing about anything on earth but the river, and his pride in his occupation surpasses the pride of kings.

We had a fine company of these river inspectors along this trip. There were eight or ten, and there was abundance of room for them in our great pilothouse. Two or three of them wore polished silk hats, elaborate shirt fronts, diamond breastpins, kid gloves, and patent-leather boots. They were choice in their English, and bore themselves with a dignity proper to men of solid means and prodigious reputation as pilots. The others were more or less loosely clad, and wore upon their heads tall felt cones that were suggestive of the days of the Commonwealth.<sup>1</sup>

I was a cipher in this august company, and felt subdued, not to say torpid. I was not even of sufficient consequence to assist at the wheel when it was necessary to put the tiller hard down in a hurry; the guest that stood nearest did that when occasion required — and this was pretty much all the time, because of the crookedness of the channel and the scant water. I stood in a corner, and the talk I listened to took the hope all out of me. One visitor said to another:

"Jim, how did you run Plum Point, coming up?"

"It was in the night, there, and I ran it the way one of the boys on the *Diana* told me; started out about fifty yards above the wood-pile on the false point, and held on the cabin under Plum Point till I raised the reef — quarter less twain — then straightened up for the middle bar till I got well abreast the old one-limbed cottonwood in

<sup>1</sup> **Commonwealth:** the period 1649 to 1660 in English history when the King had been beheaded and the Puritans were in power.

the bend, then got my stern on the cottonwood, and head on the low place above the point, and came through a-booming — nine and a half."

"Pretty square crossing, an't it?"

"Yes, but the upper bar's working down fast."

Another pilot spoke up and said:

"I had better water than that, and ran it lower down; started out from the false point — mark twain<sup>1</sup> — raised the second reef abreast the big snag in the bend, and had quarter less twain."

One of the gorgeous ones remarked:

"I don't want to find fault with your leadsmen, but that's a good deal of water for Plum Point, it seems to me."

There was an approving nod all around as this quiet snub dropped on the boaster and "settled" him. And so they went on talk-talk-talking. Meantime the thing that was running in my mind was, "Now, if my ears hear aright, I have not only to get the names of all the towns and islands and bends, and so on, by heart, but I must even get up a warm personal acquaintanceship with every old snag and one-limbed cottonwood and obscure woodpile that ornaments the banks of this river for twelve hundred miles; and more than that, I must actually know where these things are in the dark, unless these guests are gifted with eyes that can pierce through two miles of solid blackness. I wish the piloting business was in Jericho and I had never thought of it."

At dusk Mr. Bixby tapped the big bell three times (the signal to land), and the captain emerged from his drawing room in the forward end of the "texas"<sup>2</sup> and looked up inquiringly. Mr. Bixby said:

"We will lay up here all night, captain."

"Very well, sir."

That was all. The boat came to shore and was tied up for the night. It seemed to me a fine thing that the pilot could do as he pleased, without asking so grand a captain's permission. I took my supper and went immediately to bed, discouraged by my day's observations and experiences. My late voyage's notebooking was but a confusion of meaningless names. It had tangled me all up in a knot every time I had looked at it in the daytime. I now hoped for respite in sleep; but no, it reveled all through my head till sunrise again, a frantic and tireless nightmare.

<sup>1</sup> **mark twain**: the leadsmen's cry for two fathoms of water, safe depth for the boat. <sup>2</sup> **"texas"**: the structure at the front of the boat which housed the officers' quarters and the pilothouse.

Next morning I felt pretty rusty and low-spirited. We went booming along, taking a good many chances, for we were anxious to "get out of the river" (as getting out to Cairo was called) before night should overtake us. But Mr. Bixby's partner, the other pilot, presently grounded the boat, and we lost so much time getting her off that it was plain the darkness would overtake us a good long way above the mouth. This was a great misfortune, especially to certain of our visiting pilots, whose boats would have to wait for their return, no matter how long that might be. It sobered the pilothouse talk a good deal. Coming upstream, pilots did not mind low water or any kind of darkness; nothing stopped them but fog. But downstream work was different; a boat was too nearly helpless, with a stiff current pushing behind her; so it was not customary to run downstream at night in low water.

There seemed to be one small hope, however: if we could get through the intricate and dangerous Hat Island crossing before night, we could venture the rest; for we would have plainer sailing and better water. But it would be insanity to attempt Hat Island at night. So there was a deal of looking at watches all the rest of the day, and a constant ciphering upon the speed we were making; Hat Island was the eternal subject; sometimes hope was high and sometimes we were delayed in a bad crossing, and down it went again. For hours all hands lay under the burden of this suppressed excitement; it was even communicated to me, and I got to feeling so solicitous about Hat Island, and under such an awful pressure of responsibility, that I wished I might have five minutes on shore to draw a good, full, relieving breath and start over again. We were standing no regular watches. Each of our pilots ran such portions of the river as he had run when coming upstream, because of his greater familiarity with it; but both remained in the pilothouse constantly.

An hour before sunset Mr. Bixby took the wheel, and Mr. W. stepped aside. For the next thirty minutes every man held his watch in his hand and was restless, silent, and uneasy. At last somebody said, with a doleful sigh:

"Well, yonder's Hat Island — and we can't make it."

All the watches closed with a snap; everybody sighed and muttered something about its being "too bad, too bad" — "ah, if we could *only* have got here half an hour sooner!" — and the place was thick with the atmosphere of disappointment. Some started to go out but loitered, hearing no bell tap to land. The sun dipped behind the horizon; the boat went on. Inquiring looks passed from one guest

to another; and one who had his hand on the doorknob and had turned it waited, then presently took away his hand and let the knob turn back again. We bore steadily down the bend. More looks were exchanged, and nods of surprised admiration — but no words. Insensibly the men drew together behind Mr. Bixby, as the sky darkened and one or two dim stars came out. The dead silence and sense of waiting became oppressive. Mr. Bixby pulled the cord, and two deep, mellow notes from the big bell floated off on the night. Then a pause, and one more note was struck. The watchman's voice followed, from the hurricane deck:

"Labboard lead, there! Stabboard<sup>1</sup> lead!"

The cries of the leadsmen began to rise out of the distance, and were gruffly repeated by the word passers on the hurricane deck.

"M-a-r-k three! M-a-r-k three! Quarter less three! Half twain! Quarter twain! M-a-r-k twain! Quarter less —"

Mr. Bixby pulled two bell ropes, and was answered by faint jinglings far below in the engine room, and our speed slackened. The steam began to whistle through the gauge cocks. The cries of the leadsmen went on — and it is a weird sound, always, in the night. Every pilot in the lot was watching now, with fixed eyes, and talking under his breath. Nobody was calm and easy but Mr. Bixby. He would put his wheel down and stand on a spoke, and as the steamer swung into her (to me) utterly invisible marks — for we seemed to be in the midst of a wide and gloomy sea — he would meet and fasten her there. Out of the murmur of half-audible talk, one caught a coherent sentence now and then — such as:

"There; she's over the first reef all right!"

After a pause, another subdued voice:

"Her stern's coming down just *exactly* right, by *George*!"

"Now she's in the marks; over she goes!"

Somebody else muttered:

"Oh, it was done beautiful — *beautiful*!"

Now the engines were stopped altogether, and we drifted with the current. Not that I could see the boat drift, for I could not, the stars being all gone by this time. This drifting was the dismalest work; it held one's heart still. Presently I discovered a blacker gloom than that which surrounded us. It was the head of the island. We were closing right down upon it. We entered its deeper shadow, and so

<sup>1</sup> "Labboard . . . Stabboard": larboard, or left, and starboard, or right. Calling for soundings on both sides of the boat showed that they were in a tight spot.



imminent seemed the peril that I was likely to suffocate; and I had the strongest impulse to do *something*, anything, to save the vessel. But still Mr. Bixby stood by his wheel, silent, intent as a cat, and all the pilots stood shoulder to shoulder at his back.

"She'll not make it!" somebody whispered.

The water grew shoaler and shoaler, by the leadsmen's cries, till it was down to:

"Eight and a half! E-i-g-h-t feet! E-i-g-h-t feet! Seven and —"

Mr. Bixby said warningly through his speaking tube to the engineer:

"Stand by, now!"

"Ay, ay, sir!"

"Seven and a half! Seven feet! Six and —"

We touched bottom! Instantly Mr. Bixby set a lot of bells ringing, shouted through the tube, "*Now*, let her have it — every ounce you've got!" then to his partner, "Put her hard down! Snatch her! Snatch her!" The boat rasped and ground her way through the sand, hung upon the apex of disaster a single tremendous instant, and then over she went! And such a shout as went up at Mr. Bixby's back never loosened the roof of a pilothouse before!

There was no more trouble after that. Mr. Bixby was a hero that night; and it was some little time, too, before his exploit ceased to be talked about by rivermen.

Fully to realize the marvelous precision required in laying the great steamer in her marks in that murky waste of water, one should know that not only must she pick her intricate way through snags and blind reefs, and then shave the head of the island so closely as to brush the overhanging foliage with her stern, but at one place she must pass almost within arm's reach of a sunken and invisible wreck that would snatch the hull timbers from under her if she should strike it, and destroy a quarter of a million dollars' worth of steamboat and cargo in five minutes, and maybe a hundred and fifty human lives into the bargain.

The last remark I heard that night was a compliment to Mr. Bixby, uttered in soliloquy and with unction by one of our guests. He said:

"By the Shadow of Death, but he's a lightning pilot!"

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Can you understand why the apprentice pilot was discouraged at the outset? What does he say he had to learn? Why would both classes of visiting pilots add to his discouragement?

2. The pilot was the captain of a busy team on a steamboat. Did you notice who worked constantly with him when the going became difficult? What part did each one play?

3. Make a chart showing the course Mr. Bixby had to follow to bring his boat safely past the island. Some of the hazards are vaguely located, but most of them are very definite.

4. Can you understand why Mark Twain quit a profession that so fascinated him? The answer lies in the year that he quit, 1860, and the location of the Mississippi River. Figure it out.

## FROM THE FORECASTLE

*from TWO YEARS BEFORE THE MAST*

by RICHARD HENRY DANA, JR. (1815-1882)

Failing eyesight has driven many a youth from the college campus, but few have been driven into such adventures as Richard Henry Dana, Jr., encountered after he left Harvard on that account. His physician advised a long sea voyage, and Richard shipped as an ordinary sailor on a vessel bound from Boston round Cape Horn to California and back. After his return he wrote the famous *Two Years before the Mast* (1840) with the avowed purpose of telling of life at sea not from the point of view of the officers, as had formerly been done, but "from the forecastle"—from the point of view of the common sailor. He was greatly concerned over the tyranny and brutal treatment which sailors had to endure, as you can see from his account of the captain's behavior in this selection. The book had important influence on maritime legislation; but more than that, it became one of the best-loved adventure stories America has produced. The pioneers on land had no more hardships than those on sea, as you can soon realize. We find the young gentleman-sailor suffering a severe infection from a bad tooth, as well as the usual rigors of the weather and the captain's despotism.

*Friday, July 1st.* We were now nearly up to the latitude of Cape Horn; and having over forty degrees of easting to make, we squared away the yards before a strong westerly gale, shook a reef out of the fore topsail, and stood on our way, east by south, with the prospect of being up with the cape in a week or ten days. As for myself, I had had no sleep for forty-eight hours; and the want of rest, together with constant wet and cold, had increased the swelling, so that my face was nearly as large as two, and I found it impossible to get my

mouth open wide enough to eat. In this state the steward applied to the captain for some rice to boil for me, but he only got a — “No! d—— you! Tell him to eat salt junk and hard bread, like the rest of them.” This was, in truth, what I expected. However, I did not starve; for Mr. Brown, who was a man as well as a sailor and had always been a good friend to me, smuggled a pan of rice into the galley, and told the cook to boil it for me, and not let the “old man” see it. Had it been fine weather, or in port, I should have gone below and lain by until my face got well; but in such weather as this, and shorthanded as we were, it was not for me to desert my post; so I kept on deck, and stood my watch and did my duty as well as I could.

*Monday, July 4th.* This was “Independence Day” in Boston. What firing of guns, and ringing of bells, and rejoicings of all sorts, in every part of our country! The ladies (who have not gone down to Nahant for a breath of cool air and sight of the ocean) walking the streets with parasols over their heads, and the dandies in their white pantaloons and silk stockings! What quantities of ice cream have been eaten, and how many loads of ice brought into the city from a distance and sold out by the lump and the pound!

The smallest of the islands which we saw today would have made the fortune of poor Jack, if he had had it in Boston; and I dare say he would have had no objection to being there with it. This, to be sure, was no place to keep the Fourth of July. To keep ourselves warm, and the ship out of the ice, was as much as we could do. Yet no one forgot the day; and many were the wishes and conjectures and comparisons, both serious and ludicrous, which were made among all hands. The sun shone bright as long as it was up, only that a scud of black clouds was ever and anon driving across it. At noon we were in latitude  $54^{\circ} 27' S.$ , and longitude  $85^{\circ} 5' W.$ , having made a good deal of easting, but having lost in our latitude by the heading off of the wind. Between daylight we saw thirty-four ice islands of various sizes; some no bigger than the hull of our vessel, and others apparently nearly as large as the one that we first saw.

At four P.M. (it was then quite dark) all hands were called, and sent aloft, in a violent squall of hail and rain, to take in sail. We had now all got on our “Cape Horn rig” — thick boots, southwesters coming down over our neck and ears, thick trousers and jackets, and some with oilcloth suits over all. Mittens, too, we wore on deck; but it would not do to go aloft with them, as, being wet and stiff, they might let a man slip overboard, for all the hold he could get upon

a rope: so we were obliged to work with bare hands, which, as well as our faces, were often cut with the hailstones, which fell thick and large. Our ship was now all cased with ice — hull, spars, and standing rigging; and the running rigging so stiff that we could hardly bend it so as to belay it, or, still less, take a knot with it; and the sails frozen. One at a time (for it was a long piece of work and required many hands) we furled the courses, mizzen topsail, and fore-topmast staysail; and close-reefed the fore and main topsails; and hove the ship to under the fore, with the main hauled up by the clewlines and buntlines and ready to be sheeted home if we found it necessary to make sail to get the windward of an ice island. A regular lookout was then set, and kept by each night. It blew hard the whole time, and there was an almost constant driving of either rain, hail, or snow. In addition to this, it was “as thick as muck” and the ice was all about us.

The captain was on deck nearly the whole night, and kept the cook in the galley, with a roaring fire, to make coffee for him, which he took every few hours, and once or twice gave a little to his officers; but not a drop of anything was there for the crew. The captain, who sleeps all the daytime and comes and goes at night as he chooses, can have his brandy and water in the cabin, and his hot coffee at the galley; while Jack, who has to stand through everything and work in wet and cold, can have nothing to wet his lips or warm his stomach. This was a “temperance ship” by her articles, and, like too many such ships, the temperance was all in the fore-castle. The sailor, who only takes his one glass as it is dealt out to him, is in danger of being drunk; while the captain, upon whose self-possession and cool judgment the lives of all depend, may be trusted with any amount to drink at his will.

But this is not doubling Cape Horn. Eight hours of the night our watch was on deck, and during the whole of that time we kept a bright lookout: one man on each bow, another in the bunt of the fore-yard, the third mate on the scuttle, one man on each quarter, and another always standing by the wheel. The chief mate was everywhere, and commanded the ship when the captain was below. When a large piece of ice was seen in our way, or drifting near us, the word was passed along, and the ship’s head turned one way and another; and sometimes the yards squared or braced up. There was little else to do than to look out, and we had the sharpest eyes in the ship on the fore-castle. The only variety was the monotonous voice of the lookout forward — “Another island!” — “Ice ahead!” — “Ice on

the lee bow! ” — “ Hard up the helm! ” — “ Keep her off a little! ” — “ Stead-y! ”

In the meantime the wet and cold had brought my face into such a state that I could neither eat nor sleep; and though I stood it out all night, yet, when it became light, I was in such a state that all hands told me I must go below, and lie-by for a day or two, or I should be laid up for a long time. When the watch was changed I went into the steerage, and took off my hat and comforter, and showed my face to the mate, who told me to go below at once, and stay in my berth until the swelling went down, and gave the cook orders to make a poultice for me, and said he would speak to the captain.

I went below and turned in, covering myself over with blankets and jackets, and lay in my berth nearly twenty-four hours, half asleep and half awake, stupid from the dull pain.

It was a dreadful night for those on deck. A watch of eighteen hours, with wet and cold and constant anxiety, nearly wore them out; and when they came below at nine o'clock for breakfast, they almost dropped asleep on their chests, and some of them were so stiff that they could with difficulty sit down. Not a drop of anything had been given them during the whole time (though the captain, as on the night that I was on deck, had his coffee every four hours), except that the mate stole a potful of coffee for two men to drink behind the galley, while he kept a lookout for the captain. Every man had his station and was not allowed to leave it; and nothing happened to break the monotony of the night, except once setting the main topsail to run clear of a large island to leeward which they were drifting fast upon. Some of the boys got so sleepy and stupefied that they actually fell asleep at their posts; and the young third mate, Mr. Hatch, whose post was the exposed one of standing on the fore scuttle, was so stiff, when he was relieved, that he could not bend his knees to get down. By a constant lookout and a quick shifting of the helm, as the islands and pieces came in sight, the ship went clear of everything but a few small pieces, though daylight showed the ocean covered for miles.

At daybreak it fell a dead calm; and with the sun the fog cleared a little and a breeze sprung up from the westward, which soon grew into a gale. We had now a fair wind, daylight, and comparatively clear weather; yet, to the surprise of everyone, the ship continued hove-to. “ Why does not he run? ” “ What is the captain about? ” was asked by everyone; and from questions it soon grew into complaints and murmurings. When the daylight was so short, it was too bad to lose it, and a fair wind, too, which everyone had been praying

for. As hour followed hour, and the captain showed no sign of making sail, the crew became impatient, and there was a good deal of talking and consultation together on the forecastle. They had been beaten out with the exposure and hardship, and impatient to get out of it; and this unaccountable delay was more than they could bear in quietness, in their excited and restless state. Some said the captain was frightened — completely cowed by the dangers and difficulties that surrounded us, and was afraid to make sail — while others said that in his anxiety and suspense he had made a free use of brandy and opium, and was unfit for his duty.

The carpenter, who was an intelligent man, and a thorough seaman, and had great influence with the crew, came down into the forecastle and tried to induce them to go aft and ask the captain why he did not run, or request him, in the name of all hands, to make sail. This appeared to be a very reasonable request, and the crew agreed that if he did not make sail before noon they would go aft. Noon came, and no sail was made. A consultation was held again; and it was proposed to take the ship from the captain and give the command of her to the mate, who had been heard to say that if he could have his way the ship would have been half the distance to the cape before night — ice or no ice. And so irritated and impatient had the crew become that even this proposition, which was open mutiny, was entertained; and the carpenter went to his berth, leaving it tacitly understood that something serious would be done if things remained as they were many hours longer. When the carpenter left, we talked it all over and I gave my advice strongly against it. Another of the men, too, who had known something of the kind attempted in another ship by a crew who were dissatisfied with their captain, and which was followed with serious consequences, was opposed to it. Stimson, who soon came down, joined us, and we determined to have nothing to do with it. By these means the crew were soon induced to give it up for the present, though they said they would not lie where they were much longer without knowing the reason.

I still remained in my berth, fast recovering, yet not well enough to go safely on deck. And I should have been perfectly useless; for, from having eaten nothing for nearly a week, except a little rice which I forced into my mouth the last day or two, I was as weak as an infant. To be sick in a forecastle is miserable indeed. It is the worst part of a dog's life, especially in bad weather. The forecastle, shut up tight to keep out the water and cold air; the watch either on deck or asleep in their berths; no one to speak to; the pale light of

the single lamp, swinging to and fro from the beam, so dim that one can scarcely see, much less read, by it; the water dropping from the beams and carlines and running down the sides, and the forecastle so wet and dark and cheerless, and so lumbered up with chests and wet clothes, that sitting up is worse than lying in the berth. These are some of the evils. Fortunately I needed no help from anyone, and no medicine; and if I had needed help, I don't know where I should have found it. Sailors are willing enough; but it is true, as is often said, no one ships for nurse on board a vessel. Our merchant ships are always undermanned; and if one man is lost by sickness, they cannot spare another to take care of him. A sailor is always presumed to be well, and if he's sick he's a poor dog. One has to stand his wheel, and another his lookout; and the sooner he gets on deck again the better.

Accordingly, as soon as I could possibly go back to my duty, I put on my thick clothes and boots and southwester and made my appearance on deck. I had been but a few days below, yet everything looked strangely enough. The ship was cased in ice — decks, sides, masts, yards, and rigging. Two close-reefed topsails were all the sail she had on, and every sail and rope was frozen so stiff in its place that it seemed as though it would be impossible to start anything. Reduced, too, to her topmasts, she had altogether a most forlorn and crippled appearance. The sun had come up brightly; the snow was swept off the decks and ashes thrown upon them so that we could walk, for they had been as slippery as glass. It was, of course, too cold to carry on any ship's work, and we had only to walk the deck and keep ourselves warm. The wind was still ahead, and the whole ocean, to the eastward, covered with islands and field ice.

At four bells the order was given to square away the yards, and the man who came from the helm said that the captain had kept her off to N.N.E. What could this mean? The wildest rumors got adrift. Some said that he was going to run out of the ice and cross the Pacific, and go home round the Cape of Good Hope. Soon, however, it leaked out, and we found that we were running for the Straits of Magellan. The news soon spread through the ship, and all tongues were at work talking about it. No one on board had been through the straits; but I had in my chest an account of the passage of the ship *A. J. Donelson*, of New York, through those straits a few years before. The account was given by the captain, and the representation was as favorable as possible. It was soon read by everyone on board, and various opinions pronounced. The determination of our captain had at least this good effect: it gave us something to think and talk

about, made a break in our life, and diverted our minds from the monotonous dreariness of the prospect before us. Having made a fair wind of it, we were going off at a good rate and leaving the thickest of the ice behind us. This, at least, was something.

Having been long enough below to get my hands well warmed and softened, the first handling of the ropes was rather tough; but a few days hardened them. And as soon as I got my mouth open wide enough to take in a piece of salt beef and hard bread, I was all right again.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What evidence does Dana cite to prove that the distinction between captain and crew was exaggerated and unfair? Do you think this captain was worse than most?

2. What details does Dana give that make you feel keenly the bitter cold in which the sailors worked? What part did the sailors' hatred of the cold play in the drama aboard ship? What recollections of life at home intensify the unhappy situation of the sailors?

3. Some people feel that the romance of ships died when the sailing vessels gave way to steamships. Then the sailors did the heavy work; now the stokers do it. Had you rather be a sailor, even in the winter near Cape Horn, than a stoker on a modern steamship? Judging by your own answer, what kind of a pioneer would you have made?

4. For more information about the actual life of a sailor, read further in *Two Years before the Mast*. For a masterly story of whaling at about the same time, read Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*—the other great American classic of the sea in the days of the sailing vessels.

5. Vocabulary: topsail, galley, hull, spars, belay, rigging, furlled, hove-to, leeward.

### A BUSINESS LETTER

by ARTEMUS WARD (1834-1867)

"He's the wuss speller I know of," said Artemus Ward of Chaucer in "At the Tomb of Shakespeare"—one of his contributions to the English weekly *Punch*. The remark delighted his public, for Artemus Ward (Charles Farrar Browne) was one of the humorists who depended for much of their effect on outrageous spelling, a method not highly thought of at present except in dialect stories and poems. But there was a good deal more to Ward than his merely taking great liberties with the English



language, as his admirers know. He had a genuine gift for conveying humorous ideas through both the spoken and the written word. Bret Harte said that his real strength lay in the quality of his humor — "a humor that belongs to the country of boundless prairies, limitless rivers, stupendous cataracts . . . the essence of that fun that overlies the surface of our national life, which is met in the stage, rail car, canal- and flatboat, which bursts out over campfires and around barroom stoves."

Charles Farrar Browne was born in Maine, of Puritan stock. Once, when asked about his Puritan ancestry, he said, "I think we came from Jerusalem, for my father's name was Levi and we had a Moses and a Nathan in the family, but my poor brother's name was Cyrus; so perhaps that makes us Persians." He learned the trade of printer, and then became a reporter. In 1858 he got a job on the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* conducting a humorous column. Barnum had popularized the show. Browne conceived the idea of the "moral show" as a means of satire and used it as the background of many of his most effective sketches. Of course, the show existed only in his own imagination. "A Business Letter," which follows, was his first pronouncement and made him more than locally famous.

Browne's roving disposition led him to go on the lecture platform, where he was a phenomenal success because he was able to talk his particular "line" even more effectively than write it. His lectures took him to England, where he repeated his successes, but he was already weakened by tuberculosis and could not complete his engagements. He died in 1867.

One of Artemus Ward's most ardent admirers was Abraham Lincoln, who would sometimes break the tension of a solemn cabinet meeting during the War between the States by reading aloud some comical extracts from Ward's early books.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE —

SIR. — I'm movin' along — slowly along — down tords your place. My show at present consists of three moral Bares, a Kangaroo (a amoozin little Raskal — 'twould make you larf yerself to deth to see the little cuss jump up and squeal), wax figgers of G. Washington, Gen. Taylor, John Bunyan, Capt. Kidd, and Dr. Webster in the act of killin' Dr. Parkman, besides several miscellanyus moral wax statoots of celebrated piruts & murderers, &c., ekalled by few & exceld by none. Now, Mr. Editor, scratch orf a few lines sayin' how is the show bizness down to your place. I shall have my hanbills dun at your offiss. Depend upon it. I want you should git my hanbills up in flamin' stile. Also, git up a tremenjus excitement in yr. paper 'bowt my onparaleld Show. We must fetch the public somhow. We must wurk on their feelins. Cum the moral on 'em strong. If it's a temperance community, tell 'em I sined the pledge fifteen minutes

arter Ise born, but on the contery, ef your peple take their tods, say Mister Ward is as Jenial a feller as we ever met, full of conwiv'fality, & the life an sole of the Soshul Bored. Take, don't you? If you say anythin' abowt my show, say my snaiks is as harmliiss as the newborn Babe. What a interestin' study it is to see a zewolOgical animil like a snaik under perfeck subjection! My Kangaroo is the most larfable little cuss I ever saw. All for 15 cents. I am anxysus to skewer your infloounce. I repeet in regard to them hanbills, that I shall git 'em struck orf up to your printin' offiss. My perlitercal sentiments agree with yourn exactly. I know thay do, becawz I never saw a man whoos didn't.

Respectively yures,

A. WARD.

P.S. — You scratch my back & Ile scratch your back.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what way is this letter a satire on advertising? On the intelligence of the public?
2. How does the spelling add to the humorous effect? What words are so spelled as to convey a backwoods pronunciation?
3. What in this letter do you think would especially appeal to Abraham Lincoln?

#### *For Further Reading on the Frontier*

- Bruce, H. A. B., *Daniel Boone and the Wilderness Road*  
 Cable, G. W., *Old Creole Days; The Grandissimes*  
 Chaplin, Henry, *The Adventures of Johnny Appleseed*  
 Dobie, J. F., *Coronado's Children; Apache Gold and Yaqui Silver*  
 Duffus, R. L., *The Santa Fe Trail*  
 Garland, Hamlin, *The Book of the American Indian*  
 Neihardt, J. G., *The Song of Hugh Glass; The Song of Three Friends*  
 Page, Elizabeth, *Wagons West*  
 Paine, R. H., *Ships and Sailors of Old Salem; The Old Merchant Marine*  
 Radin, Paul, *The Story of the American Indian*  
 Richter, Conrad, *The Trees*  
 Rourke, Constance, *Davy Crockett*  
 Sabin, E. L., *Gold-Seekers of '49*  
 Stockton, F. R., *Buccaneers and Pirates of Our Coast*

See also page 249 of Novels for Home Reading.



## *Chapter VI*

### THE TEST OF THE UNION

(1860-1865)

IN THE epic of America the great crisis of the nineteenth century was the testing of the union, which culminated in the War between the States. Small wonder, then, that much of the writing of the period should deal with the issues leading up to this struggle, the emotions evoked during the war itself, and the deeply human problems of reconciliation after the conflict. Now that the bitterness of war is forgotten, a backward look at the literature of the struggle shows that slavery, although it furnished the dramatic focus of the antagonism, was only one issue among many and that the conflict of 1861-65 developed out of a vast complex of social forces. As we look back over the history of American settlement, it now seems almost inevitable that the different geographies of the Northern and Southern settlements, the different kinds of people who came to New England and to Virginia, and the different developments of their civilizations should someday make it uncomfortable for Northern and Southern Americans to live under the same flag.

**Causes of disunion.** The seeds of the war between the North and the South were planted more than two hundred years before the first shot was fired on Sumter. We have already seen that the geography of the Southern seaboard naturally encouraged large plantations, few towns, a leisurely life, and a landed aristocracy. The geography of New England, on the other hand, made for towns and fac-

tories and a busy, intense life. Before many years these two sections began to develop typical characters and typical points of view. The New Englander was first the Puritan, then the shrewd Yankee businessman. The Southerner was first the Cavalier, then the planter. For a while the Yankee and planter joined hands wholeheartedly to fight for independence, but as soon as freedom was won they found themselves in disagreement as to how the new government should be set up. The mercantile North, led by Hamilton, argued for a strong central government; the farming South agreed with Jefferson that the "government is best which governs least." In geography, kind of people, and political philosophy the North and the South were radically different.

In earlier years when there was no telegraph or railroad the Southern planter and the New England businessman could live their lives without bothering each other. But fast transportation, increasing economic exchange between sections, and reliable communications soon made isolation impossible. Everything one section did influenced everything the other section did. Furthermore, the West presented the greatest problem. Which way of living was to be carried into this vast new territory? The Southern planter thought that extension of slavery into the West would be the salvation of his economic system; the Northerner feared the competition of this cheap labor. Compromise followed compromise, but Abraham Lincoln estimated the situation correctly when he said, "I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free."

Of course, many people honestly thought that all men should be free, but this conviction was not the main cause of the war. It was merely the cause which was most easily talked about, the moral cause which lent itself easily to poetry and song and oratory. It is hard to become sentimental over economics, harder still to drag man into war by telling him that his civilization is different from his brother's. But when Northerners saw Simon Legree abusing his slaves on the stage or heard "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," or when the newspapers told them that their countrymen in another state had fired on the national flag, then emotions boiled over.

**The Negro in literature.** So inciting to the emotions was *Uncle Tom's Cabin* that Lincoln called its author, Harriet Beecher Stowe, "the little woman who started a great war." The story first appeared serially in a Washington abolitionist journal. When it was put in book form in 1852, it became at once a best seller. Millions read it in foreign languages as well as in English. It was made into

a play and is still presented upon our stages. The abolitionists accepted it as a great argument for their cause; the slaveholders bitterly objected to its presentation of the issues. Mrs. Stowe learned about slavery when she lived in Cincinnati, just across the Ohio River from slaveholding Kentucky, and wrote about it when she went to live in Maine. Apparently she tried to be fair to her subject; but her book, lighted by the romantic spirit of freedom so prevalent at that time, fanned the flames that sent thousands of Americans to death upon the battlefield.

Though not as widely circulated as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Whittier's antislavery poems, with their horrifying pictures of slave ships and the sufferings of fugitive slaves, also had their influence.

Before the War between the States, the folk literature of the slaves themselves played less part in stirring the emotions than what the whites wrote about them. Today the situation is reversed. We feel that our truest and most appealing picture of slave days comes from the folk literature, which was not created by individuals but evolved from the experience of the whole group. The Negro spiritual, usually religious in subject, is always dignified and at times noble in both words and music. Many spirituals carry as an overtone the Negroes' realization of their hard lot in slavery: "Now ain't dat hard trials-triberlations?" "Oh, Lawd, how long?" "Some of these mornings, bright and early, I'm gonna lay down this heavy load." They were able to express through their religious songs what they dared not utter openly: "When I git to heaven, gwineter be at ease; me and my God's gwineter do as we please." "No mo' driver's lash for me, no mo', no mo'."

Equally interesting as folk literature are the curious myths and animal stories of the plantation slaves. In them the homely wisdom of the Negroes is put into the mouths of Brer Rabbit, Brer Fox, and Brer Wolf. Joel Chandler Harris, who collected the myths and published them during the 1880's as the Uncle Remus stories (see page 114), had this to say of their origin: "All that I know — all that we Southerners know — about it is that every old Southern mammy in the South is full of these stories. One thing is certain — the Negroes did not get them from the whites: probably they are of remote African origin."

With later freedom and education the Negroes have developed a new type of creative writing, which belongs to the story of modern literature; but both whites and Negroes today look back with appreciation to our rich heritage of this old folk literature.

**States' rights: Calhoun and Webster.** The emotional issues of

man's relation to man were, of course, intertwined with political differences between the North and South, which developed eventually into armed resistance. For more than a generation orators and statesmen in the halls of Congress were brilliantly and bitterly debating these questions: Should slavery be abolished? Should it be extended into the territories? Do the states have the constitutional right to nullify federal legislation? Should Northerners be compelled to return fugitive slaves? From time to time the specific points of difference varied; but, no matter what particular issue was being argued, the question inevitably resolved itself into the more basic problem of States' rights: What powers should be granted to the federal government and what ones should be retained by the states?

The debate from early in the century until the very end of the war gave American literature some of its greatest orations. From South Carolina came Robert Y. Hayne to declare that a state was the final judge of the federal government's interpretation of the Constitution. His successor in the Senate was John C. Calhoun who perhaps more brilliantly than any other man stated the argument for States' rights. To many historians Calhoun seems the greatest intellect of the period. In national politics for forty years, as Congressman, Senator, Vice-President, he won pre-eminence as the political philosopher of the South, the developer and advocate of the States'-rights theory.

Against these men and their arguments rose the North's orator, Daniel Webster. Reading his speeches, we can only guess at the power which must have been in the man. Even such a calm critic as Emerson wrote about Webster's "awful charms of person, manner, and voice." His style was rather more ponderous and elaborate than we like to hear in our oratory today, but it made him the idol of New England for years. For a decade, it has been said, he was virtual President of the United States. In his "Reply to Hayne" he made the classic statement of the idea of national unity. Throughout his career he upheld that cause. At last it betrayed him. On the seventh of March, 1850, he arose to debate Henry Clay's compromise fugitive-slave bill. The bill satisfied neither South nor North. Calhoun had opposed it vigorously a few days before, and Webster was expected to express the North's disapproval. But Webster, in order to save the Union, supported the compromise in his brilliant "Seventh of March Speech." It was the end of his career. The New England abolitionists thought that he had betrayed them. Whittier wrote about him the sad, bitter poem "Ichabod" (see page 481). Two years later Webster died.

**Influential newspaper editors.** In the battle of opinion and ar-

gument which preceded the War between the States, some of the loudest guns were fired by newspapers. Before the Revolution the writers who sought to arouse and control public opinion had to depend upon pamphlets; but the nineteenth century saw the development of great metropolitan dailies, and thus the pamphleteer was replaced by the newspaper editor. Public opinion and policy concerning slavery, States' rights, free territories, and all the other complex issues of the middle decades were powerfully influenced by such editors as Horace Greeley, William Lloyd Garrison, and William Cullen Bryant. As editor of the New York *Tribune* for thirty years, Greeley gained a national reputation as a trenchant commentator on politics of the day. Garrison infuriated both the North and the South by the uncompromising attacks upon slavery which he published in his radically abolitionist periodical, the *Liberator*. Besides being our first important poet, Bryant for almost fifty years edited the New York *Evening Post*, which exhibited under his guidance a high literary quality and a courageous moral tone.

**Songs of the war.** Every war breeds its camp and marching tunes; and the War between the States added its quota of stirring songs, still familiar to us long after the conclusion of the bitter struggle which inspired them.

"John Brown's Body," one of the earliest and most popular Northern war songs, furnished the melody for Julia Ward Howe's stirring "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Mrs. Howe heard the melody sung by a Massachusetts regiment as it marched down Broadway on its way to the front, and she promptly wrote the new words. But among the soldiers themselves the more popular songs were much less literary than Mrs. Howe's poem. The soldiers preferred simpler pieces, such as "John Brown's Body" itself, the gay and spirited "Marching through Georgia," "The Battle Cry of Freedom," "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp," the sentimental "Just before the Battle, Mother," and the lovely "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground" with its plaintive longing for peace.

In the Southern armies "Maryland, My Maryland" was popular, but the soldiers quickly adopted "Dixie" as their favorite. Written originally as a minstrel song, the words seemed inadequate; but revisions of the text never became popular, and the original version with its stirring music proved a tremendous inspiration to the Southern soldiers throughout the war. Moreover, of all the war songs of this period, "Dixie" is practically the only one which is still really alive today.

**Abraham Lincoln.** There are some men whose writings become literature although they are not intended to be "literary." One of these was Abraham Lincoln. He made no effort at style. "The style," it has been said, "is the man." Lincoln's style reflects his simplicity, his genuineness, his clear and logical thought, his homely wit, his frontier training, his humanness and love of humanity. His writing is always simple, genuine, unaffected, whether he makes a political speech, writes to Horace Greeley, sympathizes with Mrs. Bixby, or dedicates the cemetery at Gettysburg. His writings, although he seems never to have thought about them merely as "writings," have become one of the precious heritages of American literature. The "Gettysburg Address" and the letter to Mrs. Bixby are taken by all the world as models of pure and perfect English writing.

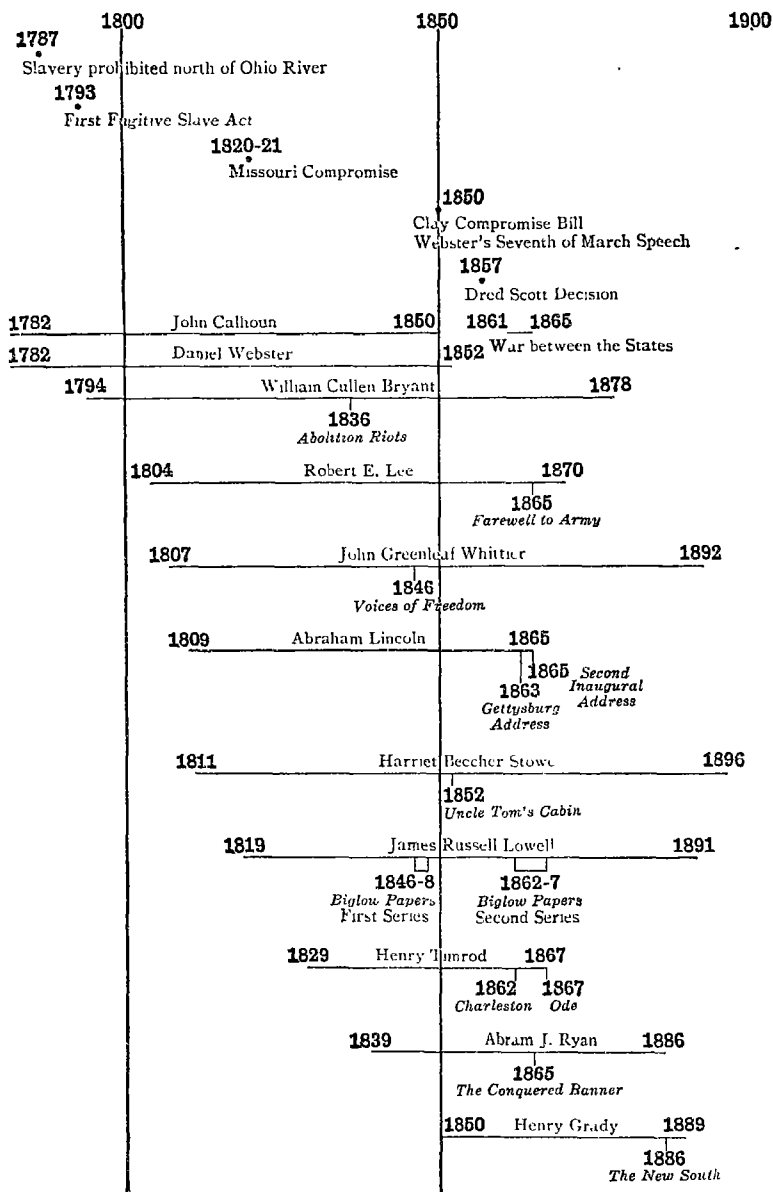
The end of any terrible struggle leaves raw wounds. No one saw this more clearly than Lincoln, and it is probably a safe guess that if Lincoln had lived, much of the shortsighted mistreatment of the Southern people after the war would have been avoided. "With malice toward none," the great conclusion of his "Second Inaugural Address," was intended to herald a policy: but, instead, it proved to be a benediction pronounced just before his death.

**Healing the wounds of war.** That Lincoln's spirit of magnanimous reconciliation was in the hearts of many is attested by much of the literature of the time. General Robert E. Lee's affectionate farewell to the remnant of his army, and two poems — Abram J. Ryan's "The Conquered Banner" and Francis Miles Finch's "The Blue and the Gray" — all show the same fine desire "to bind up the nation's wounds."

At last emerges the New South, presented to us vividly and sympathetically by Henry W. Grady, a lovable and popular Southern editor and orator. By his forceful personality and his cleverness at writing and speaking, he was able to go far in shattering the despair which hung over the war-torn Southern states after the great struggle of the sixties. In his editorials in the *Atlanta Constitution* he championed the New South, to be built upon the ruins of the old order through the development of local resources, diversification of crops, establishment of manufactures, and the solution of the Negro question. Atlanta became the center of this new movement, and Henry Grady became known throughout the country as its leader. He was invited to make speeches in various important cities of the North, and his great oratorical ability did much to wipe out the hatreds and prejudices created by the War between the States. When he died in



# THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES



1889, the country lost "an accepted leader of driving power, integrity, sweetness, and unmeasured promise."

By the end of the nineteenth century, though many problems were still unsolved, the North and the South had been firmly welded into one nation.

#### SUMMARY

The great test of the Union of States came in the middle of the nineteenth century and finally flared into the War between the States, 1861-65. It was a struggle between two different points of view and two antagonistic civilizations when the development of the country westward required that there be but one. The question of slavery was basic in these differences. Characteristics of the plantation Negroes are shown in their folk literature, both the homely wisdom of the slave and the bitter travail of a race in bondage. The flames of abolition sentiment were fanned by Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The point of conflict, however, was not just slavery. The ever-recurring issue of national unity versus States' rights was debated by great orators — Webster for the North, Hayne and Calhoun for the South, and many others. Newspaper editors played an important role in the heated disputes of the period. During the war itself numerous songs and ballads became popular, and a few, notably "Dixie," are still sung. The speeches, letters, and state papers of Abraham Lincoln, because they expressed the shrewd, simple, sincere character of the man in pure and perfect English, have become one of the precious heritages of American literature. During the difficult days of readjustment a few voices of reconciliation were heard; and finally, as late as 1886, Henry W. Grady wrote finis to the literature of the struggle in his oration "The New South." Let us remember, however, that the war as a *subject* for literature has produced much excellent writing during the twentieth century.

#### LET MY PEOPLE GO!

##### NEGRO SPIRITUAL

This song is a typical Negro spiritual of the days before the war. It is an earnest plea for release from bondage, very thinly masked in the old Bible story of Pharaoh's oppression of the Children of Israel. This same theme is well developed by the late Negro poet Paul Laurence Dunbar in his amusing "Ante Bellum Sermon."

Although these spirituals often carry the decided syncopated rhythm that Negro music has given our popular American melodies, they are in no sense jazz or swing—even though you may have heard them so corrupted. They are the religious and spiritual cry of a race in bondage, serious and exalted in tone.

If you can, you should hear Marian Anderson's recordings of this beautiful song and other spirituals.

The musical score is written for a single voice on a treble clef staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The melody is characterized by syncopation and a slow, exalted tempo. The score consists of five lines of music with corresponding lyrics underneath. Dynamic markings include *mf* (mezzo-forte) at the beginning, *f* (forte) for the third line, and *f* and *sfz* (sforzando) for the final line. The lyrics are: "When Is - rael was in E - gypts land Let my peo - ple go, O - pressed so hard they could not stand, Let my peo - ple go. Go down Mos - es, 'Way down in E - gypts land, — Tell ole— Pha - - raoh, To let my peo - ple go. O let my peo - ple go. —"

2. "When spoke the Lord," bold Moses said,  
 "Let my people go!  
 If not I'll smite your first-born dead;  
 Let my people go!"
3. No more shall they in bondage toil,  
 Let my people go!  
 Let them come out with Egypt's spoil,  
 Let my people go!

## NOBODY KNOWS DE TROUBLE I SEE

## NEGRO SPIRITUAL

"Nobody Knows de Trouble I See" is one of the best-known spirituals. It illustrates the endless repetition of lines and the system of leads and responses found in so many of these songs. Also, it is strongly religious. Here again is the cry of a race in bitter trouble.

*mp*

No-bod - y knows de troub-le I see, No-bod - y knows but

Je - sus;— No-bod - y knows de troub-le I see, Glo - ry, hal - le -

lu - jah! Oh, No - bod - y knows de troub-le I see,

No-bod - y knows but Je - sus,— No-bod - y knows de

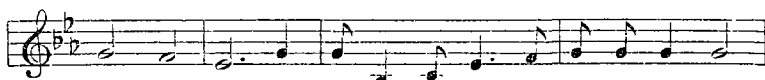
troub-le I see, Glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah! Some -

times I'm up Some-times I'm down, Oh, yes, Lord; Some-times I'm al - mos'

to de groun'— Oh, yes, Lord. Al-tho' you see me goin' 'long so,



Oh, yes, Lord: I have my tri - als here be - low,—



Oh, yes, Lord. Oh! No - bod - y knows de troub - le I see,



No - bod - y knows but Je - sus;— No - bod - y knows de



troub - le I see, Glo - ry, hal - le - lu - jah!

(Both these spirituals have additional stanzas.)

## ABOLITION RIOTS

by WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878)

This vigorous and courageous editorial appeared in the New York *Evening Post* on August 8. 1836. Already the lines were being drawn for the coming struggle over the slavery question; already reason was yielding to force on this great issue. Bryant understood the real danger of mob violence to free institutions, and in this editorial he courageously defends the rights of the unpopular abolitionists to the freedom of the press.

A MEETING of the people of Cincinnati have proclaimed the right of silencing the expression of unpopular opinions by violence. We refer our readers to the proceedings of an antiabolition meeting lately held in that city. They will be found in another part of this paper.

The Cincinnati meeting, in the concluding resolution offered by Wilson N. Brown and adopted with the rest, declare in so many words that, if they cannot put down the abolitionist press by fair means, they will do it by foul; if they cannot silence it by remonstrance, they will silence it by violence; if they cannot persuade it to

desist, they will stir up mobs against it, inflame them to madness, and turn their brutal rage against the dwellings, the property, the persons, the lives of the wretched abolitionists and their families. In announcing that they will put them down by force all this is included. Fire, robbery, and bloodshed are the common excesses of an enraged mob. There is no extreme of cruelty and destruction to which, in the drunkenness and delirium of its fury, it may not proceed. The commotions of the elements can as easily be appeased by appeals to the quality of mercy as these commotions of the human mind; the whirlwind and the lightning might as well be expected to pause and turn aside to spare the helpless and innocent as an infuriated multitude.

If the abolitionists must be put down, and if the community are of that opinion, there is no necessity of violence to effect the object. The community have the power in their own hands; the majority may make a law declaring the discussion of slavery in a certain manner to be a crime, and imposing penalties. The law may then be put in force against the offenders, and their mouths may be gagged in due form and with all the solemnities of justice.

What is the reason this is not done? The answer is ready. The community are for leaving the liberty of the press untrammelled; there is not a committee that can be raised in any of the state legislatures north of the Potomac who will report in favor of imposing penalties on those who declaim against slavery; there is not a legislature who would sanction such a report; there is not a single free state the people of which would sustain a legislature in so doing. These are facts, and the advocates of mob law know them to be so.

Who are the men that issue this invitation to silence the press by violence? Who but an insolent, brawling minority, a few noisy fanatics, who claim that their own opinions shall be the measure of freedom for the rest of the community, and who undertake to overawe a vast, pacific majority by threats of wanton outrage and plunder? These men are for erecting an oligarchy of their own and riding roughshod over the people and the people's rights. They claim a right to repeal the laws established by the majority in favor of the freedom of the press. They make new laws of their own, to which they require that the rest of the community shall submit, and, in case of a refusal, they threaten to execute them by the ministry of a mob. There is no tyranny or oppression exercised in any part of the world more absolute or more frightful than that which they would establish. So far as we are concerned, we are determined

that this despotism shall neither be submitted to nor encouraged. In whatever form it makes its appearance, we shall raise our voice against it. We are resolved that the subject of slavery shall be as it ever has been — as free a subject of discussion and argument and declamation as the difference between whiggism and democracy, or the difference between the Armenians and the Calvinists. If the press chooses to be silent on the subject, it shall be the silence of perfect free will, and not the silence of fear. We hold that this combination of the few to govern the many by the terror of illegal violence is as wicked and indefensible as a conspiracy to rob on the highway. We hold it to be the duty of good citizens to protest against it whenever and wherever it shows itself, and to resist it, if necessary, to the death.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Do you agree with Bryant on the dangers of mob violence? Do you think you could always withstand the invitation to join a mob? Discuss.
2. What instances of mob violence have you read about recently? Did editors and public officials uphold or condemn the mob? Which attitude took the greater courage?
3. What do you think of Bryant's implication that men resort to mob violence only when they cannot obtain laws to accomplish their purpose?
4. Bring to class an editorial from a current newspaper which strikes you as having persuasive power. Try to find one on the subject of freedom of speech or of the press. Compare the arguments with Bryant's.

#### *For Your Vocabulary*

5. When conflict and argument over government arise, men employ more frequently words descriptive of different types of government. You know some using the ending *-cracy* for rule or power: *democracy*, or rule by the people, and *aristocracy*, or rule by only the "best" people. Bryant here expresses his alarm at the threat of an *oligarchy* (page 1037), rule by only a few and not necessarily the best. The ending *-archy*, like *-cracy* means rule. The term *oligarchy* is used most often in criticism or attack, but you will find Henry W. Grady using it of the Southern social organization and also calling the leading Southerners *oligarchs*. Perhaps his use was ironical, for he was talking to Northerners who had often hurled the abusive terms at the Southern *aristocrats*. Do you know the exact meanings of more familiar terms built on these endings — *plutocracy*, *autocracy*, *monarchy*, *anarchy*?

## ABRAHAM LINCOLN (1809-1865)

Out of the bitterness and bloodshed sounded the voice of Abraham Lincoln, defining simply and clearly the heartfelt but groping aspirations of his countrymen. Born in the backwoods, deprived of formal education, Lincoln developed by rigorous self-discipline an art of expression that was close to perfection. Employing only the commonest words, he achieved an elevation of statement and a moving cadence which place his speeches and letters in the first rank of American writings.

## FAREWELL AT SPRINGFIELD

When Lincoln left Springfield, Illinois, in 1861, to take up his duties as President in Washington, he seemed to realize that Fate might never let him return. The scene of his departure has been vividly described by Carl Sandburg in his *Abraham Lincoln: the Prairie Years*: "A cold drizzle of rain was falling on the morning of February 11 when Lincoln and his party of fifteen were to leave Springfield on the eight-o'clock at the Great Western Railway station. Chilly gray mist hung the circle of the prairie horizon. A short little locomotive with a flat-topped smokestack stood puffing with a baggage car and special passenger car hitched on; a railroad president and superintendent were on board. A thousand people crowded in and around the brick station, inside of which Lincoln was standing, and one by one came hundreds of old friends, shaking hands, wishing him luck and Godspeed, all faces solemn. Even Judge David Davis, weighing 350 pounds, wearing a new white silk hat, was a serious figure.

"A path was made for Lincoln from the station to his car; hands stretched out for one last handshake. He hadn't intended to make a speech; but on the platform of the car, as he turned and saw his home people, he took off his hat, stood perfectly still, and looked almost as he had at the Bowling Green burial services when tears had to take the place of words. He raised a hand for silence. They stood with hats off. Then he said slowly, amid the soft gray drizzle from the sky:

"FRIENDS, no one who has never been placed in a like position can understand my feelings at this hour nor the impressive sadness I feel at this parting. For more than a quarter of a century I have lived among you, and during all that time I have received nothing but kindness at your hands. Here I have lived from my youth till now I am an old man. Here the most sacred trusts of earth were assumed; here all my children were born and one of them lies buried. To you, dear friends, I owe all that I have, all that I am. All the



strange checkered past seems to crowd now upon my mind. Today I leave you; I go to assume a task more difficult than that which devolved upon General Washington. Unless the great God who assisted him shall be with and aid me, I must fail. But if the same omniscient mind and the same Almighty arm that directed and protected him shall guide and support me, I shall not fail; I shall succeed. Let us all pray that the God of our fathers may not forsake us now. To Him I commend you all. Permit me to ask that with equal sincerity and faith you will all invoke his wisdom and guidance for me. With these few words I must leave you — for how long I know not. Friends, one and all, I must now bid you an affectionate farewell."

Mr. Sandburg continues:

"Bells rang, there was a grinding of wheels, and the train moved and carried Lincoln away from Springfield. The tears were not yet dry on some faces when the train had faded into the gray to the east.

"Some of the crowd said afterward that Lincoln, too, was in tears, that tears ran down his face as he spoke that morning.

"And one of the crowd said there were no tears on Lincoln's face. 'But he had a face with dry tears,' said this one. 'He was a man who often had dry tears.'"

#### LETTER TO GENERAL JOSEPH HOOKER

During 1862 the Northern Army had suffered several defeats and Lincoln had had to remove both General McClellan and General Burnside. The man that he put in command of the Army of the Potomac over the protest of Secretary Stanton and General Halleck was General Joseph Hooker, who had served under both of his predecessors and had criticized both with great frankness. The next day after the appointment Lincoln sent General Hooker this remarkable letter, which shows his directness, fearlessness, and understanding of men. It administers a rebuke at the same time that it shows confidence and encouragement.

I HAVE placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier, which, of course, I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable, if not an indispensable, quality. You are ambitious, which, within rea-

sonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition, and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictatorships. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it. And now, beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

## SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

(MARCH 4, 1865)

The morning of Lincoln's second inauguration was cold and stormy, but at noon the sun came out as the procession moved with dignity from the White House. Numbers of wounded soldiers were conspicuous in the great throng. The following comment upon the address was made by the London *Spectator* after the President's death: "We cannot read it without a renewed conviction that it is the noblest political document known to history, and should have for the nation and the statesmen he left behind him something of a sacred and almost prophetic character." The last paragraph of this speech and the entire "Gettysburg Address" are inscribed on opposite walls of the beautiful Lincoln Memorial at Washington.

*Fellow Countrymen:* At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued, seemed fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great

contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented. The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself; and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it — all sought to avert it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war, insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it without war — seeking to dissolve the Union, and divide effects, by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war; but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive; and the other would accept war rather than let it perish. And the war came.

One-eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was, somehow, the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union, even by war; while the government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease with, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces; but let us judge not, that we be not judged.<sup>1</sup> The prayers of both could not be answered — that of neither has been answered fully.

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to the man by whom the offense cometh."<sup>2</sup> If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the province of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both

<sup>1</sup> judge not . . . judged: Matt. 7:1. <sup>2</sup> woe . . . cometh: Matt. 18:7.

North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope — fervently do we pray — that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."<sup>1</sup>

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why does Lincoln think that his second inaugural can be a much shorter address than the first inaugural?
2. Select phrases and sentences which show Lincoln's magnanimous spirit toward the South.

#### *For Ambitious Students*

3. Lincoln speaks of the military situation as satisfactory. Find out from a history how matters stood between the two armies at this time. How long after this did Lee's surrender take place?
4. An interesting special topic would be the comparison of Lincoln's two inaugural addresses as to length, information, style, and attitude toward the South.

### LINCOLN SPEAKS AT GETTYSBURG

(NOVEMBER 19, 1863)

*by* CARL SANDBURG

Probably no speech of so few words has ever become so celebrated as Lincoln's "Gettysburg Address," or aroused such dispute as to how it was

<sup>1</sup> The judgments . . . altogether: Ps. 19 :9.

written, delivered, and received. Many persons gain their impression of the circumstances of this speech from Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews's story *The Perfect Tribute*, but unfortunately that story is fiction and many of its details are not historically true. The following account is taken from Carl Sandburg's *Abraham Lincoln: the War Years*, which was published in 1939 and, together with *Abraham Lincoln: the Prairie Years* (1926), is rapidly becoming accepted as the definitive Lincoln biography. Carl Sandburg, poet of American democracy, collector of American songs, has given us the truest, most intimate, most sympathetic biography of the most American of all Americans.

A PRINTED invitation came to Lincoln's hands notifying him that on Thursday, November 19, 1863, exercises would be held for the dedication of a National Soldiers' Cemetery at Gettysburg. The same circular invitation had been mailed to Senators, Congressmen, the governors of Northern states, members of the cabinet, by the commission of Pennsylvanians who had organized a corporation through which Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maryland, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota were to share the cost of a decent burying ground for the dust and bones of the Union and Confederate dead.

In the helpless onrush of the war, it was known, too many of the fallen had lain as neglected cadavers rotting in the open fields or thrust into so shallow a resting place that a common farm plow caught in their bones. Now by order of Governor Curtin of Pennsylvania seventeen acres had been purchased on Cemetery Hill, where the Union center stood its colors on the second and third of July, and plots of soil had been allotted each state for its graves.

The sacred and delicate duties of orator of the day had fallen on Edward Everett. An eminent cultural figure, perhaps foremost of all distinguished American classical orators, he was born in 1794, had been United States Senator, Governor of Massachusetts, member of Congress, Secretary of State under Fillmore, minister to Great Britain, Phi Beta Kappa poet at Harvard, professor of Greek at Harvard, president of Harvard.

The Union of States was a holy concept to Everett, and the slavery issue secondary, though when president of Harvard from 1846 to 1849 he refused to draw the color line, saying in the case of a Negro applicant, Beverley Williams, that admission to Harvard College depended on examinations. "If this boy passes the examinations, he will be admitted; and if the white students choose to withdraw, all the

income of the college will be devoted to his education." Not often was he so provocative.

Serene, suave, handsomely venerable in his sixty-ninth year, a prominent specimen of Northern upper-class distinction, Everett was a natural choice of the Pennsylvania commissioners, who sought an orator for a solemn national occasion. When in September they notified him that the date of the occasion would be October 23, he replied that he would need more time for preparation, and the dedication was postponed till November 19.

Lincoln meanwhile, in reply to the printed circular invitation, sent word to the commissioners that he would be present at the ceremonies. This made it necessary for the commissioners to consider whether the President should be asked to deliver an address when present. Clark E. Carr, of Galesburg, Illinois, representing his state on the Board of Commissioners, noted that the decision of the board to invite Lincoln to speak was an afterthought.

The question was raised as to his ability to speak upon such a grave and solemn occasion. Besides, it was said that, with his important duties and responsibilities, he could not possibly have the leisure to prepare an address. In answer it was urged that he himself, better than anyone else, could determine as to these questions, and that, if he were invited to speak, he was sure to do what, under the circumstances, would be right and proper.

And so on November 2 David Wills of Gettysburg, as the special agent of Governor Curtin and also acting for the several states, by letter informed Lincoln that the several states having soldiers in the Army of the Potomac who were killed, or had since died at hospitals in the vicinity, had procured grounds for a cemetery and proper burial of their dead.

These grounds will be consecrated and set apart to this sacred purpose by appropriate ceremonies on Thursday, the 19th instant. I am authorized by the Governors of the various States to invite you to be present and participate in these ceremonies, which will doubtless be very imposing and solemnly impressive. It is the desire that after the oration, you, as Chief Executive of the nation, formally set apart these grounds to their sacred use by a few appropriate remarks.

Mr. Wills proceeded farther as to the solemnity of the occasion, and when Lincoln had finished reading the letter he understood definitely that the event called for no humor and that a long speech was not expected of him.

The invitation [wrote Clark E. Carr] was not settled upon and sent to Mr. Lincoln until the second of November, more than six weeks after Mr. Everett had been invited to speak, and but little more than two weeks before the exercises were held.

On the second Sunday before the Gettysburg ceremonies were to take place Lincoln went to the studio of the photographer Gardner for a long-delayed sitting. Noah Brooks walked with him, and he carefully explained to Brooks that he could not go to the photographer on any other day without interfering with the public business and the photographer's business, to say nothing of his liability to be hindered en route by curiosity seekers "and other seekers." On the White House stairs Lincoln had paused, turned, walked back to his office, and rejoined Brooks with a long envelope in his hand, an advance copy of Edward Everett's address to be delivered at the Gettysburg dedication. It was thoughtful of Everett to take care they should not cover the same ground in their speeches, he remarked to Brooks, who exclaimed over the length of the Everett address, covering nearly two sides of a one-page supplement of a Boston newspaper. Lincoln quoted a line he said he had read somewhere from Daniel Webster: "Solid men of Boston, make no long orations." There was no danger that he should get upon the lines of Mr. Everett's oration, he told Brooks, for what he had ready to say was very short, or as Brooks recalled his emphasis, "short, short, short." He had hoped to read the Everett address between sittings, but the photographer worked fast, Lincoln got interested in talk and did not open the advance sheets while at Gardner's. In the photograph which Lincoln later gave to Brooks an envelope lay next to Lincoln's right arm resting on a table. In one other photograph made by Gardner that Sunday the envelope was still on the table. The chief difference between the two pictures was that in one Lincoln had his knees crossed and in the other the ankles.

Lamon noted that Lincoln wrote part of his intended Gettysburg address at Washington, covered a sheet of foolscap paper with a memorandum of it, and before taking it out of his hat and reading it to Lamon he said that it was not at all satisfactory to him, that he was afraid he would not do himself credit nor come up to public expectation. He had been too busy to give it the time he would like to.

Various definite motives besides vague intuitions may have guided Lincoln in his decision to attend and speak even though half his cabinet had sent formal declinations in response to the printed circular invitations they had all received. Though the Gettysburg dedication

was to be under interstate auspices, it had tremendous national significance for Lincoln because on the platform would be the state governors whose co-operation with him was of vast importance. Also a slander and a libel had been widely mouthed and printed that on his visit to the battlefield of Antietam nearly a year before he had laughed obscenely at his own funny stories and called on Lamon to sing a cheap comic song. Perhaps he might go to Gettysburg and let it be seen how he demeaned himself on a somber landscape of sacrifice.

His personal touch with Gettysburg, by telegraph, mail, courier, and by a throng of associations, made it a place of great realities to him. Just after the battle there, a woman had come to his office, the doorman saying she had been "crying and taking on" for several days trying to see the President. Her husband and three sons were in the army. On part of her husband's pay she had lived for a time, till money from him stopped coming. She was hard put to scrape a living and needed one of her boys to help.

The President listened to her, standing at a fireplace, hands behind him, head bowed, motionless. The woman finished her plea for one of her three sons in the army. He spoke. Slowly and almost as if talking to himself alone the words came and only those words:

"I have two, and you have none."

He crossed the room, wrote an order for the military discharge of one of her sons. On a special sheet of paper he wrote full and detailed instructions where to go and what to say in order to get her boy back.

In a few days the doorman told the President that the same woman was again on hand crying and taking on. "Let her in," was the word. She had found doors opening to her and officials ready to help on seeing the President's written words she carried. She had located her boy, camp, regiment, company. She had found him, yes, wounded at Gettysburg, dying in a hospital, and had followed him to the grave. And, she begged, would the President now give her the next of her boys?

As before he stood at the fireplace, hands behind him, head bent low, motionless. Slowly and almost as if talking to himself alone the words came and as before only those words:

"I have two, and you have none."

He crossed the room to his desk and began writing. As though nothing else was to do she followed, stood by his chair as he wrote, put her hand on the President's head, smoothed his thick and disorderly hair with motherly fingers. He signed an order giving her the next of her boys, stood up, put the priceless paper in her hand as he



choked out the one word, "There!" and with long quick steps was gone from the room with her sobs and cries of thanks in his ears.

Thus the Kentuckian, James Speed, gathered the incident and told it. By many strange ways Gettysburg was to Lincoln a fact in crimson mist.

When Lincoln boarded the train for Gettysburg on November 18, his best chum in the world, Tad, lay sick abed and the doctors not sure what ailed him. The mother still remembered Willie and was hysterical about Tad. But the President felt imperative duty called him to Gettysburg.

Provost Marshal General James B. Fry as a War Department escort came to the White House, but the President was late in getting into the carriage for the drive to the station. They had no time to lose, Fry remarked. Lincoln said he felt like an Illinois man who was going to be hanged and as the man passed along the road on the way to the gallows the crowds kept pushing into the way and blocking passage. The condemned man at last called out, "Boys, you needn't be in such a hurry to get ahead; there won't be any fun till I get there."

Flags and red-white-and-blue bunting decorated the four-car special train. Aboard were the three cabinet members, Nicolay and Hay, army and navy representatives, newspapermen, the French and Italian ministers and attachés. The rear third of the last coach had a drawing room, where from time to time the President talked with nearly everyone aboard as they came and went. Henry Clay Cochrane, lieutenant of marines, noted:

I happened to have a New York *Herald* and offered it to Mr. Lincoln. He took it and thanked me, saying, "I like to see what they say about us." The news was about Burnside at Knoxville, Grant and Sherman at Chattanooga, and Meade on the Rapidan, all expecting trouble. He read for a little while and then began to laugh at some wild guesses of the paper about pending movements. It was pleasant to see his sad face lighted up. He was looking sallow, sunken-eyed, thin, careworn and very quiet. He returned the paper, remarking among other things that when he had first passed over that road on his way to Congress in 1847 he noticed square-rigged vessels up the Patapsco river as far as the Relay House and now there seemed to be only small craft.

At the Calvert Street Station, Secretary Seward began to get uneasy as we approached Baltimore. Upon reaching the Calvert Street Station in Baltimore all was quiet, less than two hundred people assembled, among them women with children in arms. They called for the President. He took two or three of the babies up and kissed them, which greatly pleased

the mothers. General Schenck and staff joined us and soon after the President went forward in the car and seated himself with a party of choice spirits, among whom was Major Frederick W. Lincoln of Boston, not a kinsman. They told stories for an hour or so, Mr. Lincoln taking his turn and enjoying it. Approaching Hanover Junction, he arose and said, "Gentlemen, this is all very pleasant, but the people will expect me to say something to them tomorrow, and I must give the matter some thought." He then returned to the rear room of the car.

At sundown the train pulled into Gettysburg and Lincoln was driven to the Wills residence, Seward to the Harper home fronting on the public square. A sleepy little country town of 3,500 was overflowing with human pulses again. Private homes were filled with notables and nondescripts. Hundreds slept on the floors of hotels. Military bands blared till late in the night serenading whomsoever. The weather was mild and the moon up for those who chose to go a-roaming. When serenaders called on the President for the speech, he made again one of those little addresses saying there was nothing to say. "In my position it is sometimes important that I should not say foolish things. [A voice: "If you can help it."] It very often happens that the only way to help it is to say nothing at all. Believing that is my present condition this evening, I must beg of you to excuse me from addressing you further."

The crowd didn't feel it was much of a speech. They went next door with the band and blared for Seward. He spoke so low that Hay could not hear him, but he opened the stopgaps of patriotic sentiment, saying in part, "I thank my God for the hope that this is the last fratricidal war which will fall upon the country which is vouchsafed to us by Heaven — the richest, the broadest, the most beautiful, the most magnificent, and capable of a greater destiny than has ever been given to any part of the human race." What more could a holiday crowd ask for on a fair night of moonlit November? Seward gave them more and closed: "Fellow citizens, good night." It was good night for him but not for them. They serenaded five other speakers.

At dinner in the Wills home that evening Lincoln met Edward Everett, a guest under the same roof, and Governor Curtin and others. About ten o'clock he was in his room, with paper and pencil ready to write, when he sent a colored servant down for Judge Wills to come up. Still later, about eleven o'clock, he sent the colored servant down again for Judge Wills, who came up and heard Lincoln request to see Mr. Seward. Judge Wills offered to go and bring Seward from next door at the Harpers'. "No, I'll go and see him," said Lincoln, who

gathered his sheets of paper and went for a half-hour with his Secretary of State.

Whether Seward made slight or material alterations in the text on the sheets was known only to Lincoln and Seward. It was midnight or later that Lincoln went to sleep, probably perfectly clear in his mind as to what his speech would be the next day. The one certainty was that his "few appropriate remarks," good or bad, would go to an immense audience. Also he slept better for having a telegram from Stanton reporting there was no real war news and "On inquiry Mrs. Lincoln informs me that your son is better this evening."

Fifteen thousand, some said 30,000 or 50,000 people were on Cemetery Hill for the exercises the next day when the procession from Gettysburg arrived afoot and horseback representing the United States Government, the army and navy, governors of states, mayors of cities, a regiment of troops, hospital corps, telegraph-company representatives, Knights Templar, Masonic Fraternity, Odd Fellows, and other benevolent associations, the press, fire departments, citizens of Pennsylvania and other states. They were scheduled to start at ten o'clock, and at that hour on the clock Lincoln in a black suit, high silk hat, and white gloves came out of the Wills residence and mounted a horse. A crowd was on hand and he held a reception on horseback. At eleven the parade began to move. The President's horse seemed small for him, as some looked at it. Clark E. Carr, just behind the President, believed he noticed that the President sat erect and looked majestic to begin with and then got to thinking so that his body leaned forward, his arms hung limp, and his head bent far down.

A long telegram sent by Stanton at ten o'clock from Washington had been handed him. Burnside seemed safe though threatened at Knoxville, Grant was starting a big battle at Chattanooga, and "Mrs. Lincoln reports your son's health as a great deal better and he will be out today."

The march of the procession of military and civic bodies began. "Mr. Lincoln was mounted upon a young and beautiful chestnut horse, the largest horse, the largest in the Cumberland Valley," wrote Lieutenant Cochrane. This seemed the first occasion that anyone had looked at the President mounted with a feeling that just the right horse had been picked to match his physical length. "His towering figure surmounted by a high silk hat made the rest of us look small," thought Cochrane.

Minute guns spoke while the procession moved along Baltimore Street to the Emmittsburg Road, then by way of the Taneytown Road to the cemetery, where troop lines stood in salute to the President.

The march was over in fifteen minutes. But Mr. Everett, the orator of the day, had not arrived. Bands played till noon. Mr. Everett arrived.

The United States House chaplain, the Reverend Thomas H. Stockton, offered a prayer while the thousands stood with uncovered heads.

Benjamin B. French, officer in charge of buildings in Washington, introduced the Honorable Edward Everett, orator of the day, who rose, bowed low to Lincoln, saying, "Mr. President." Lincoln responded, "Mr. Everett."

The orator of the day then stood in silence before a crowd that stretched to limits that would test his voice. Beyond and around were the wheat fields, the meadows, the peach orchards, long slopes of land, and five and seven miles farther the contemplative blue ridge of a low mountain range. His eyes could sweep them as he faced the audience. He had taken note of it in his prepared and rehearsed address.

Overlooking these broad fields now reposing from the labors of the waning years, the mighty Alleghenies dimly towering before us, the graves of our brethren beneath our feet, it is with hesitation that I raise my poor voice to break the eloquent silence of God and Nature. But the duty to which you have called me must be performed; — grant me, I pray you, your indulgence and your sympathy. [Everett proceeded] It was appointed by law in Athens [and gave an extended sketch of the manner in which the Greeks cared for their dead who fell in battle. He spoke of the citizens assembled to consecrate the day.] As my eye ranges over the fields whose sods were so lately moistened by the blood of gallant and loyal men, I feel, as never before, how truly it was said of old that it is sweet and becoming to die for one's country.

Northern cities would have been trampled in conquest but for "those who sleep beneath our feet," said the orator. He gave an outline of how the war began, traversed decisive features of the three days' battles at Gettysburg, discussed the doctrine of state sovereignty and denounced it, drew parallels from European history, and came to his peroration quoting Pericles on dead patriots: "The whole earth is the sepulcher of illustrious men." The men of nineteen sister states had stood side by side on the perilous ridges. "Seminary Ridge, the Peach Orchard, Cemetery, Culp, and Wolf Hill, Round Top, Little Round Top, humble names, henceforward dear and famous — no lapse of time, no distance of space, shall cause you to be forgotten." He had spoken for an hour and fifty-seven minutes, some said a trifle over two hours, repeating almost word for word an address that oc-

cupied nearly two newspaper pages, as he had written it and as it had gone in advance sheets to many newspapers.

Everett came to his closing sentence without a faltering voice: "Down to the latest period of recorded time, in the glorious annals of our common country there will be no brighter page than that which relates THE BATTLES OF GETTYSBURG." It was the effort of his life and embodied the perfections of the school of oratory in which he had spent his career. His erect form and sturdy shoulders, his white hair and flung-back head at dramatic points, his voice, his poise, and chiefly some quality of inside goodheartedness, held most of his audience to him, though the people in the front rows had taken their seats three hours before his oration closed.

The Baltimore Glee Club sang an ode written for the occasion by Benjamin B. French, who had introduced Everett to the audience. The poets Longfellow, Bryant, Whittier, Lowell, George Boker, had been requested but none found time to respond with a piece to be set to music. The two closing verses of the ode by French immediately preceded the introduction of the President to the audiences.

Having read Everett's address, Lincoln knew when the moment drew near for him to speak. He took out his own manuscript from a coat pocket, put on his steel-bowed glasses, stirred in his chair, looked over the manuscript, and put it back in his pocket. The Baltimore Glee Club finished singing the ode by French. Ward Hill Lamon introduced the President of the United States. He rose, and holding in one hand the two sheets of paper at which he occasionally glanced, he delivered the address in his high-pitched and clear-carrying voice. The Cincinnati *Commercial* reporter wrote: "The President rises slowly, draws from his pocket a paper, and, when commotion subsides, in a sharp, unmusical treble voice, reads the brief and pithy remarks." Hay wrote in his diary: "The President, in a firm, free way, with more grace than is his wont, said his half dozen words of consecration." Charles Hale of the Boston *Advertiser*, also officially representing Governor Andrew of Massachusetts, had notebook and pencil in hand, took down the slow-spoken words of the President, as follows:

*Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.*

*Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation — or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated — can long endure.*

*We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We are met to dedi-*

*cate a portion of it as the final resting place of those who have given their lives that that nation might live.*

*It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.*

*But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow, this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our power to add or to detract.*

*The world will very little note nor long remember what we say here; but it can never forget what they did here.*

*It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated, here, to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried on. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us; that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*

In a speech to serenaders just before the battle of Gettysburg four and a half months before, Lincoln had referred to the founding of the republic as taking place "eighty odd years since." Then he had hunted up the exact date, which was eighty-seven years hence, and phrased it "Fourscore and seven years ago" instead of "Eighty-seven years since."

In the written copy of his speech from which he read, Lincoln used the phrase "our poor power." In other copies of the speech which he wrote out later, he again used the phrase "our poor power." So it was evident that he meant to use the word "poor" when speaking to his audience, but it escaped him. Also in the copy held in his hands while facing the audience he had not written the words "under God," though he did include those words in later copies which he wrote. Therefore, the words "under God" were decided upon after he wrote the text the night before at the Wills residence.

The New York *Tribune* and many other newspapers indicated "[Applause]" at five places in the address and "[Long continued applause]" at the end. The applause, however, according to most of the responsible witnesses, was formal and perfunctory, a tribute to the occasion, to the high office, to the array of important men of the nation on the platform, by persons who had sat as an audience for three hours. Nine sentences had been spoken in five minutes, and

some were surprised that it should end before the orator had really begun to get his outdoor voice.

A photographer had made ready to record a great historic moment, had hustled about with his dry plates, his black box on a tripod, and before he had his head under the hood for an exposure, the President had said "by the people, for the people" and the nick of time was past for a photograph.

The New York *Times* reporter gave his summary of the program by writing:

The opening prayer by Reverend Mr. Stockton was touching and beautiful, and produced quite as much effect upon the audience as the classic sentences of the orator of the day. President Lincoln's address was delivered in a clear loud tone of voice, which could be distinctly heard at the extreme limits of the large assemblage. It was delivered (or rather read from a sheet of paper which the speaker held in his hand) in a very deliberate manner, with strong emphasis, and with a most businesslike air

The Philadelphia *Press* man, John Russell Young, privately felt that Everett's speech was the performance of a great actor whose art was too evident, that it was "beautiful but cold as ice." The New York *Times* man noted:

Even while Mr. Everett was delivering his splendid oration, there were as many people wandering about the fields, made memorable by the fierce struggles of July, as stood around the stand listening to his eloquent periods. They seem to have considered, with President Lincoln, that it was not what was *said* here, but what was *done* here, that deserved their attention. In wandering about these battlefields, one is astonished and indignant to find at almost every step of his progress the carcasses of dead horses which breed pestilence in the atmosphere. I am told that more than a score of deaths have resulted from this neglect in the village of Gettysburg the past summer; in the house in which I was compelled to seek lodgings, there are now two boys sick with typhoid fever attributed to this cause. Within a stone's throw of the whitewashed hut occupied as the headquarters of General Meade, I counted yesterday no less than ten carcasses of dead horses, lying on the ground where they were struck by the shells of the enemy.

The audience had expected, as the printed program stipulated, "Dedicatory Remarks, by the President of the United States." No eloquence was promised. Where eloquence is in flow the orator must have time to get tuned up, to expatiate and expand while building toward his climaxes, it was supposed. The New York *Tribune* man and

other like observers merely reported the words of the address, with the one preceding sentence: "The dedicatory remarks were then delivered by the President." These reporters felt no urge to inform their readers about how Lincoln stood; what he did with his hands; how he moved, vocalized; or whether he emphasized or subdued any parts of the address. Strictly, no address as such was on the program for him. He was down for just a few perfunctory "dedicatory remarks."

According to Lamon, Lincoln himself felt that about all he had given the audience was ordinary garden-variety dedicatory remarks, for Lamon wrote that Lincoln told him just after delivering the speech that he had regret over not having prepared it with greater care. "Lamon, that speech won't *scour*. It is a flat failure and the people are disappointed." On the farms where Lincoln grew up as a boy when wet soil stuck to the mold board of a plow they said it didn't "scour."

The near-by *Patriot and Union* of Harrisburg took its fling:

The President succeeded on this occasion because he acted without sense and without constraint in a panorama that was gotten up more for the benefit of his party than for the glory of the nation and the honor of the dead. We pass over the silly remarks of the President; for the credit of the nation we are willing that the veil of oblivion shall be dropped over them and that they shall no more be repeated or thought of.

Everett's opinion of the speech he heard Lincoln deliver was written in a note to Lincoln the next day and was more than mere courtesy: "I should be glad if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion in two hours as you did in two minutes." Lincoln's immediate reply was: "In our respective parts yesterday, you could not have been excused to make a short address, nor I a long one. I am pleased to know that, in your judgment, the little I did say was not entirely a failure."

The ride to Washington took until midnight. Lincoln was weary, talked little, stretched out on one of the side seats in the drawing room, and had a wet towel laid across his eyes and forehead.

He had stood that day, the world's foremost spokesman of popular government, saying that democracy was yet worth fighting for. He had spoken as one in mist who might head on deeper yet into mist. He incarnated the assurances and pretenses of popular government, implied that it could and might perish from the earth. What he meant by "a new birth of freedom" for the nation could have a thousand interpretations. The taller riddles of democracy stood up out of the



address. It had the dream touch of vast and furious events epitomized for any foreteller to read what was to come. He did not assume that the drafted soldiers, substitutes, and bounty-paid privates had died willingly under Lee's shot and shell, in deliberate consecration of themselves to the Union cause. His cadences sang the ancient song that where there is freedom men have fought and sacrificed for it, and that freedom is worth men's dying for. For the first time since he became President he had on a dramatic occasion declaimed, howsoever it might be read, Jefferson's proposition which had been a slogan of the Revolutionary War — "All men are created equal" — leaving no other inference than that he regarded the Negro slave as a man. His outwardly smooth sentences were inside of them gnarled and tough with the enigmas of the American experiment.

Back at Gettysburg the blue haze of the Cumberland Mountains had dimmed till it was a blur in a nocturne. The moon was up and fell with a bland golden benevolence on the new-made graves of soldiers, on the sepulchers of old settlers, on the horse carcasses of which the onrush of war had not yet permitted removal. The New York *Herald* man walked amid them and ended the story he sent his paper: "The air, the trees, the graves are silent. Even the relic hunters are gone now. And the soldiers here never wake to the sound of reveille."

In many a country cottage over the land, a tall old clock in a quiet corner told time in a ticktock deliberation. Whether the orchard branches hung with pink-spray blossoms or icicles of sleet, whether the outside news was seedtime or harvest, rain or drouth, births or deaths, the swing of the pendulum was right and left and right and left in a ticktock deliberation.

The face and dial of the clock had known the eyes of a boy who listened to its ticktock and learned to read its minute and hour hands. And the boy had seen years measured off by the swinging pendulum, and grown to man size, had gone away. And the people in the cottage knew that the clock would stand there and the boy never again come into the room and look at the clock with the query, "What is the time?"

In a row of graves the unidentified boy would sleep long in the dedicated final resting place at Gettysburg. Why he had gone away and why he would never come back had roots in some mystery of flags and drums, of national fate in which individuals sing as in a deep sea, of men swallowed and vanished in a man-made storm of smoke and steel.

The mystery deepened and moved with ancient music and inviola-

ble consolation because a solemn Man of Authority had stood at the graves of the unidentified and spoken the words "We cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. . . . From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion."

To the backward and forward pendulum swing of a tall old clock in a quiet corner they might read those cadenced words while outside the windows the first flurry of snow blew across the orchard and down over the meadow, the beginnings of winter in a gun-metal gloaming to be later arched with a star-flung sky.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Contrast the style of Lincoln's address with that of Everett's as indicated by the few excerpts included here.
2. Make a list of adjectives which might be applied to Lincoln because of his actions as recorded here; for example, modest, kindhearted.
3. What is added to the account by the inclusion of the story of the woman who had lost her two sons?
4. In what details does the text of the "Gettysburg Address" printed here differ from the one generally used? Why did Sandburg use this one?
5. What details in this account indicate that its author is a poet?
6. Vocabulary: cadavers, suave, fratricidal, expatiate, nocturne.

### *For Your Vocabulary*

7. Much of Lincoln's deserved popularity grew out of the feeling that he stood for much that was intangible but dear to the hearts of Americans. And the lasting appeal of his utterances is due in large part to his power to express clearly what was vague but important to many others. In his closing comments Sandburg well expresses these traits when he says that Lincoln *incarnated* (page 1055), or embodied in human flesh, the assurances of democracy, and that his words at Gettysburg *epitomized* (page 1056) the "vast and furious" events of his day. An *epitome* is a brief but accurate statement of a whole case or cause. The word is also used of a man who is representative of a whole group, as the "*epitome* of aristocracy" or the "*epitome* of suffering mankind." *Incarnation* is similarly used, as in saying that a man is the *incarnation* of some quality such as vanity or generosity.

*For Ambitious Students*

8. What recent criticisms of public men seem to you to be as unwarranted as the Harrisburg *Patriot and Union's* criticism of Lincoln's remarks? Bring newspaper clippings to class to illustrate your point.

9. The class might find it interesting to dramatize the commissioners' discussion of the question of asking Lincoln to speak at the ceremonies. Try to bring out the various attitudes toward Lincoln suggested by Sandburg.

FAREWELL TO THE ARMY OF  
NORTHERN VIRGINIA*by* ROBERT E. LEE (1807-1870)

As leader of the Confederate forces, Robert E. Lee became the idol of the South, and today he is honored by all Americans as one of our greatest heroes. Member of a famous Virginia family, number-two man in the Class of 1829 at West Point, husband of the great-granddaughter of Martha Washington, father of the number-one man in the West Point Class of 1854, General Lee has become a symbol of the highest type of American gentleman and soldier. He refused the field command of the United States Army at the outbreak of the War between the States because he believed he owed his first loyalty to his native state.

The dignified restraint of this heartbreaking farewell message attests the greatness of Robert E. Lee. Of the thirty-five thousand troops with which he had started from the Richmond-Petersburg line, only seventy-eight hundred remained with arms in their hands. To these the gallant leader acknowledges that the cause for which so many sacrifices have been made is lost.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF NORTHERN  
VIRGINIA

(APRIL 10, 1865)

## GENERAL ORDER NO. 9

AFTER four years of arduous service marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources.

I need not tell the survivors of so many hard-fought battles who have remained steadfast to the last that I have consented to this result from no distrust of them; but feeling that valor and devotion could accomplish nothing that would compensate for the loss that must have attended the continuance of the contest, I determined to avoid the useless sacrifice of those whose past services have endeared them to their countrymen. By the terms of the agreement, officers and men can return to their homes and remain until exchanged.

You may take with you the satisfaction that proceeds from the consciousness of duty faithfully performed, and I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend to you His blessing and protection.

With an unceasing admiration of your constancy and devotion to your country, and a grateful remembrance of your kind and generous consideration of myself, I bid you all an affectionate farewell.

R. E. LEE, *General*

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Read again the selection "Lee in Defeat" on page 398.
2. Many unusual honors have been heaped upon Lee. For instance, a statue of him in his Confederate uniform has been placed in the Capitol at Washington. Can you name others?
3. Have you ever experienced any conflict among your various loyalties? If so, you will be better able to sympathize with the difficult choice imposed upon Lee.

#### *For Ambitious Students*

4. Read Galsworthy's *Loyalties* for an interesting presentation in the form of a drama of the theme of divided loyalties.
5. For a picture of Lee read John Drinkwater's play *Robert E. Lee*. For other references, see page 402.

#### THE CONQUERED BANNER

by ABRAM J. RYAN (1839-1886)

Abram Joseph Ryan was a Roman Catholic priest who served in the Confederate Army as a chaplain. "The Conquered Banner" was written at the end of the war and expresses his sympathy for those who had fought and lost. Like "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Maryland, My Mary-



Pardon those who trailed and tore it; 35  
And oh, wildly they deplore it,  
Now to furl and fold it so!

Furl that banner! True, 'tis gory,  
Yet 'tis wreathed around with glory,  
And 'twill live in song and story 40  
Though its folds are in the dust!

For its fame on brightest pages,  
Penned by poets and by sages,  
Shall go sounding down the ages —  
Furl its folds though now we must. 45

Furl that banner, softly, slowly!  
Treat it gently — it is holy,  
For it droops above the dead.  
Touch it not — unfold it never;  
Let it droop there, furled forever, — 50  
For its people's hopes are fled!

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what spirit does the poet meet defeat? How does this compare with the spirit of Lee as described by Page (see page 398)?

2. Compare this with other famous flag poems, such as "The Star-Spangled Banner" and Drake's "The American Flag," as to circumstances of writing and the poet's feeling for the emblem. Many flag poems of both our own and foreign nations can be found in *Verse for Patriots* by S. Broadhurst and C. L. Rhodes.

#### THE NEW SOUTH

by HENRY WOODFIN GRADY (1850-1889)

This oration was delivered by Grady before the distinguished membership of the New England Society in New York City at the banquet celebrating its eighty-first birthday, December 22, 1886. Among a number of brilliant after-dinner speeches given on this occasion, this one was pre-eminent; and at its conclusion the speaker was accorded a tremendous and sincere ovation of applause, and congratulation. It is a skillfully con-

structed after-dinner talk, with all the necessary elements of flattery, humility, and humor. But it is much more — it is an honest and heartfelt plea for understanding of the New South.

“THERE was a South of slavery and secession — that South is dead. There is a South of union and freedom — that South, thank God, is living, breathing, growing every hour.” These words, delivered from the immortal lips of Benjamin H. Hill, at Tammany Hall, in 1866, true then and truer now, I shall make my text tonight.

Mr. President and Gentlemen: Let me express to you my appreciation of the kindness by which I am permitted to address you. I make this abrupt acknowledgment advisedly, for I feel that if, when I raise my provincial voice in this ancient and august presence, it could find courage for no more than the opening sentence, it would be well if in that sentence I had met in a rough sense my obligation as a guest, and had perished, so to speak, with courtesy on my lips and grace in my heart.

Permitted, through your kindness, to catch my second wind, let me say that I appreciate the significance of being the first Southerner to speak at this board, which bears the substance, if it surpasses the semblance, of original New England hospitality — and honors the sentiment that in turn honors you, but in which my personality is lost, and the compliment to my people made plain.

Pardon me one word, Mr. President, spoken for the sole purpose of getting into the volumes<sup>1</sup> that go out annually freighted with the rich eloquence of your speakers — the fact that the Cavalier as well as the Puritan was on the continent in its early days, and that he was “up and able to be about.” I have read your books carefully and I find no mention of the fact, which seems to me an important one for preserving a sort of historical equilibrium, if for nothing else.

Let me remind you that the Virginia Cavalier first challenged France on the continent — that Cavalier John Smith gave New England its very name, and was so pleased with the job that he has been handing his own name around ever since — and that while Miles Standish was cutting off men’s ears for courting a girl without her parents’ consent, and forbade men to kiss their wives on Sunday, the Cavalier was courting everything in sight, and that the Almighty had vouchsafed great increase to the Cavalier colonies, the huts in the wilderness being as full as the nests in the woods.

<sup>1</sup> **volumes:** the yearbooks containing reports of the speeches made before the society.

But having incorporated the Cavalier as a fact in your charming little books, I shall let him work out his own salvation, as he has always done, with engaging gallantry, and we will hold no controversy as to his merits. Why should we? Neither Puritan nor Cavalier long survived as such. The virtues and good traditions of both happily still live for the inspiration of their sons and the saving of the old fashion. But both Puritan and Cavalier were lost in the storm of the first Revolution, and the American citizen, supplanting both and stronger than either, took possession of the republic bought by their common blood and fashioned to wisdom, and charged himself with teaching men government and establishing the voice of the people as the voice of God.

My friends, Dr. Talmage<sup>1</sup> has told you that the typical American has yet to come. Let me tell you that he has already come. Great types, like valuable plants, are slow to flower and fruit. But from the union of these colonists, Puritans and Cavaliers, from the straightening of their purposes and the crossing of their blood, slow perfecting through a century, came he who stands as the first typical American, the first who comprehended within himself all the strength and gentleness, all the majesty and grace of this republic — Abraham Lincoln. He was the sum of Puritan and Cavalier, for in his ardent nature were fused the virtues of both, and in the depths of his great soul the faults of both were lost. He was greater than Puritan, greater than Cavalier, in that he was American, and that in his honest form were first gathered the vast and thrilling forces of his ideal government — charging it with such tremendous meaning and elevating it above human suffering that martyrdom, though infamously aimed, came as a fitting crown to a life consecrated from the cradle to human liberty. Let us, each cherishing the traditions and honoring his fathers, build with reverent hands to the type of this simple but sublime life, in which all types are honored, and in our common glory as Americans there will be plenty and to spare for your forefathers and for mine.

Dr. Talmage has drawn for you, with a master's hand, the picture of your returning armies. He has told you how, in the pomp and circumstance of war, they came back to you, marching with proud and victorious tread, reading their glory in a nation's eyes! Will you bear with me while I tell you of another army that sought its home at the close of the late war — an army that marched home in defeat and not in victory — in pathos and not in splendor, but

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Talmage: Thomas De Witt Talmage (1832-1902), clergyman, author, editor, and lecturer.



in glory that equaled yours, and to hearts as loving as ever welcomed heroes home!

Let me picture to you the footsore Confederate soldier as, buttoning up in his faded gray jacket the parole which was to bear testimony to his children of his fidelity and faith, he turned his face southward from Appomattox in April, 1865. Think of him as, ragged, half-starved, heavyhearted, enfeebled by want and wounds, having fought to exhaustion, he surrenders his gun, wrings the hands of his comrades in silence, and lifting his tear-stained and pallid face for the last time to the graves that dot old Virginia hills, pulls his gray cap over his brow, and begins the slow and painful journey.

What does he find — let me ask you who went to your homes eager to find, in the welcome you had justly earned, full payment for four years' sacrifice — what does he find when, having followed the battle-stained cross against overwhelming odds, dreading death not half so much as surrender, he reaches the home he left so prosperous and beautiful? He finds his house in ruins, his farm devastated, his slaves free, his stock killed, his barns empty, his trade destroyed, his money worthless, his social system, feudal in its magnificence, swept away; his people without law or legal status; his comrades slain, and the burdens of others heavy on his shoulders. Crushed by defeat, his very traditions are gone. Without money, credit, employment, material, or training; and besides all this, confronted with the gravest problems that ever met human intelligence — the establishment of a status for the vast body of his liberated slaves.

What does he do — this hero in gray with a heart of gold? Does he sit down in sullenness and despair? Not for a day. Surely God, who had stripped him of his prosperity, inspired him in his adversity. As ruin was never before so overwhelming, never was restoration swifter.

The soldier stepped from the trenches into the furrow; horses that had charged Federal guns marched before the plow, and fields that ran red with human blood in April were green with the harvest in June; women reared in luxury cut up their dresses and made breeches for their husbands, and, with a patience and heroism that fit women always as a garment, gave their hands to work. There was little bitterness in all this. Cheerfulness and frankness prevailed. "Bill Arp"<sup>1</sup> struck the keynote when he said, "Well, I killed as many of them as they did of me, and now I'm going to work." So did the

<sup>1</sup> "Bill Arp": Pen name of one of the humorists of the war period known as "crackerbox philosophers."

soldier returning home after defeat and roasting some corn on the roadside who made the remark to his comrades, "You may leave the South if you want to, but I'm going to Sandersville, kiss my wife, and raise a crop; and if the Yankees fool with me any more, I'll whip 'em again."

I want to say to General Sherman, who is considered an able man in our parts, though some people think he is a kind of careless man about fire, that from the ashes he left us in 1864 we have raised a brave and beautiful city; that somehow or other we have caught the sunshine in the bricks and mortar of our homes, and have builded therein not one ignoble prejudice or memory.

But what is the sum of our work? We have found out that in the summing up the free Negro counts more than he did as a slave. We have planted the schoolhouse on the hilltop and made it free to white and black. We have sowed towns and cities in the place of theories, and put business above politics. We have challenged your spinners in Massachusetts and your ironmakers in Pennsylvania. We have learned that the \$400,000,000 annually received from our cotton crop will make us rich when the supplies that make it are home-raised. We have reduced the commercial rate of interest from 24 to 6 per cent, and are floating 4 per cent bonds. We have learned that one Northern immigrant is worth fifty foreigners and have smoothed the path to Southward, wiped out the place where Mason and Dixon's line used to be, and hung out the lathstring to you and yours.

We have reached the point that marks perfect harmony in every household, when the husband confesses that the pies which his wife cooks are as good as those his mother used to bake; and we admit that the sun shines as brightly and the moon as softly as it did before the war. We have established thrift in city and country. We have fallen in love with work. We have restored comfort to homes from which culture and elegance never departed. We have let economy take root and spread among us as rank as the crab grass which sprung from Sherman's cavalry camps, until we are ready to lay odds on the Georgia Yankee as he manufactures relics of the battlefield in a one-story shanty and squeezes pure olive oil out of his cottonseed, against any down-Easter that ever swapped wooden nutmegs for flannel sausage in the valleys of Vermont. Above all, we know that we have achieved in these "piping times of peace" a fuller independence for the South than that which our fathers sought to win in the forum by their eloquence or compel in the field by their swords.

It is a rare privilege, sir, to have had part, however humble, in

this work. Never was nobler duty confided to human hands than the uplifting and upbuilding of the prostrate and bleeding South — misguided, perhaps, but beautiful in her suffering, and honest, brave, and generous always. In the record of her social, industrial, and political illustrations we await with confidence the verdict of the world.

But what of the Negro? Have we solved the problem he presents, or progressed in honor and equity toward solution? Let the record speak to the point. No section shows a more prosperous laboring population than the Negroes of the South, none in fuller sympathy with the employing and landowning class. He shares our school fund, has the fullest protection of our laws, and the friendship of our people. Self-interest, as well as honor, demand that he should have this. Our future, our very existence depend upon our working out this problem in full and exact justice. We understand that when Lincoln signed the emancipation proclamation your victory was assured, for he then committed you to the cause of human liberty, against which the arms of man cannot prevail — while those of our statesmen who trusted to make slavery the cornerstone of the Confederacy doomed us to defeat as far as they could, committing us to a cause that reason could not defend or the sword maintain in sight of advancing civilization.

Had Mr. Toombs<sup>1</sup> said, which he did not say, "that he would call the roll of his slaves at the foot of Bunker Hill," he would have been foolish, for he might have known that whenever slavery became entangled in war it must perish, and that the chattel in human flesh ended forever in New England when your fathers — not to be blamed for parting with what didn't pay — sold their slaves to our fathers — not to be praised for knowing a paying thing when they saw it. The relations of the Southern people with the Negro are close and cordial. We remember with what fidelity for four years he guarded our defenseless women and children, whose husbands and fathers were fighting against his freedom. To his eternal credit be it said that whenever he struck a blow for his own liberty he fought in open battle, and when at last he raised his black and humble hands that the shackles might be struck off, those hands were innocent of wrong against his helpless charges, and worthy to be taken in loving grasp by every man who honors loyalty and devotion. Ruffians have maltreated him, rascals have misled him, philanthropists established a bank for him,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Toombs: Robert Toombs (1810-1885), Secretary of State in the Confederacy under President Jefferson Davis. He was opposed to the Reconstruction measures and was one of the "unrelenting" Southerners.

but the South, with the North, protests against injustice to this simple and sincere people.

To liberty and enfranchisement is as far as law can carry the Negro. The rest must be left to conscience and common sense. It must be left to those among whom his lot is cast, with whom he is indissolubly connected, and whose prosperity depends upon their possessing his intelligent sympathy and confidence. Faith has been kept with him, in spite of calumnious assertions to the contrary by those who assume to speak for us or by frank opponents. Faith will be kept with him in the future, if the South holds her reason and integrity.

But have we kept faith with you? In the fullest sense, yes. When Lee surrendered — I don't say when Johnston surrendered, because I understand he still alludes to the time when he met General Sherman last as the time when he determined to abandon any further prosecution of the struggle — when Lee surrendered, I say, and Johnston quit, the South became and has since been, loyal to this Union. We fought hard enough to know that we were whipped, and in perfect frankness accept as final the arbitrament of the sword to which we had appealed. The South found her jewel in the toad's head of defeat. The shackles that had held her in narrow limitations fell forever when the shackles of the Negro slave were broken. Under the old regime the Negroes were slaves to the South; the South was a slave to the system. The old plantation, with its simple police regulations and feudal habit, was the only type possible under slavery. Thus was gathered in the hands of a splendid and chivalric oligarchy the substance that should have been diffused among the people, as the rich blood, under certain artificial conditions is gathered at the heart, filling that with affluent rapture but leaving the body chill and colorless.

The old South rested everything on slavery and agriculture, unconscious that these could neither give nor maintain healthy growth. The new South presents a perfect democracy, the oligarchs leading in the popular movement — a social system compact and closely knitted, less splendid on the surface, but stronger at the core — a hundred farms for every plantation, fifty homes for every palace — and a diversified industry that meets the complex needs of this complex age.

The new South is enamored of her new work. Her soul is stirred with the breath of a new life. The light of a grander day is falling fair on her face. She is thrilling with the consciousness of growing power and prosperity. As she stands upright, full-statured and equal among the people of the earth, breathing the keen air and looking out upon the expanded horizon, she understands that her emancipa-

tion came because through the inscrutable wisdom of God her honest purpose was crossed, and her brave armies were beaten.

This is said in no spirit of timeserving or apology. The South has nothing for which to apologize. She believes that the late struggle between the states was war and not rebellion; revolution and not conspiracy, and that her convictions were as honest as yours. I should be unjust to the dauntless spirit of the South and to my own convictions if I did not make this plain in this presence. The South has nothing to take back.

In my native town of Athens is a monument that crowns its central hill — a plain white shaft. Deep cut into its shining side is a name dear to me above the names of men — that of a brave and simple man who died in brave and simple faith. Not for all the glories of New England, from Plymouth Rock all the way, would I exchange the heritage he left me in his soldier's death. To the foot of that shaft I shall send my children's children to reverence him who ennobled their name with his heroic blood. But, sir, speaking from the shadow of that memory which I honor as I do nothing else on earth, I say that the cause in which he suffered and for which he gave his life was adjudged by higher and fuller wisdom than his or mine, and I am glad that the omniscient God held the balance of battle in His Almighty hand and that human slavery was swept forever from American soil — that the American Union was saved from the wreck of war.

This message, Mr. President, comes to you from consecrated ground. Every foot of soil about the city in which I live is sacred as a battleground of the republic. Every hill that invests it is hallowed to you by the blood of your brothers who died for your victory, and doubly hallowed to us by the blood of those who died hopeless, but undaunted, in defeat — sacred soil to all of us — rich with memories that make us purer and stronger and better — silent but stanch witnesses in its red desolation of the matchless valor of American hearts and the deathless glory of American arms — speaking an eloquent witness in its white peace and prosperity to the indissoluble union of American states and the imperishable brotherhood of the American people.

Now, what answer has New England to this message? Will she permit the prejudice of war to remain in the hearts of the conquerors, when it has died in the hearts of the conquered? Will she transmit this prejudice to the next generation, that in their hearts which never felt the generous ardor of conflict it may perpetuate itself? Will she withhold, save in strained courtesy, the hand which straight from

his soldier's heart Grant offered to Lee at Appomattox? Will she make the vision of a restored and happy people, which gathered above the couch of your dying captain, filling his heart with grace, touching his lips with praise, and glorifying his path to the grave — will she make this vision on which the last sign of his expiring soul breathed a benediction, a cheat and delusion?

If she does, the South, never abject in asking for comradeship, must accept with dignity its refusal; but if she does not refuse to accept in frankness and sincerity this message of good will and friendship, then will the prophecy of Webster, delivered in this very society forty years ago amid tremendous applause, become true, be verified in its fullest sense, when he said, "Standing hand to hand and clasping hands, we should remain united as we have been for sixty years, citizens of the same country, members of the same government, united, all united now and united forever." There have been difficulties, contentions, and controversies, but I tell you that in my judgment

Those opened eyes,  
Which like the meteors of a troubled heaven,  
All of one nature, of one substance bred,  
Did lately meet in th' intestine shock,  
Shall now, in mutual well beseeeming ranks,  
March all one way.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Point out the features of this address which make it an effective after-dinner speech.
2. What do you think of Grady's reference to his father? Do you think his remarks sincere? What effect was achieved by them?
3. What were the chief problems to be solved by the New South? Do any still remain?

### *For Ambitious Students*

4. What features of your own environment came from the Puritans? Which came from the Cavaliers? Read Vachel Lindsay's "The Virginians Are Coming Again" for another defense of the Cavalier and his contribution to America.
5. What effect did the assassination of Lincoln have on the problem of reconstruction in the South? What effect did the election of 1876 have? Look up the history of this problem from 1865 to the date of this speech.



## *Chapter VII*

### GROWTH AND CHANGE

(1860-1914)

BEFORE the War between the States, the West had been only the fringe of the nation. During the rest of the century the West became the core and heart of national interest. Not only did the pioneers seeking homes turn westward, but also the interests of capitalists and industrialists were drawn by the vast natural wealth awaiting exploitation. The national Congress was increasingly concerned with administering and distributing great landholdings. Tremendous changes were taking place in national thought.

A new America came out of the war. It had left six hundred thousand of its best men on the battlefields between Gettysburg and Vicksburg. It had seen the flames of thousands of Southern homes on the path of Sherman's march. It had seen the slaves freed, and the foundation knocked out from under the Southern economic system. It had seen New England farms deserted because they could not compete with the new rich land to the west. Opportunity after the war seemed to lie only in the West. With the attention and activity of the nation turned to the West, the old order could not last long. The first thin, venturesome wave of explorers had reached the other ocean. Close behind followed the wave of settlers, enlarged by the postwar discontent. And before the settlers had taken up half the free land, the industrialists were pressing on their heels, bringing even greater changes.

During the years from 1860 to 1890 the last of the old and the first of the new lived side by side in the West. Curious Indians watched the building of the first transcontinental railroad, proud harbinger of the machine age, and passengers on the first trains saw from the car windows the last of the great herds of buffalo that roamed the Western plains. Let us untangle the twisted skein, have a last look in section 1 at the American frontier, and then turn in section 2 to the rise of industry that finally swept across the continent.

### 1. *The Late Frontier*

Although by 1860 the years of the frontier were numbered and the industrial society that was soon to sweep it under was already booming in the East, those last thirty years saw some of the most picturesque phases of life in the old West — and some of the hardest work that went to its building. As always, the land and its resources determined the kind of life that was to be lived in each section. The high, semiarid plains that were unsuited for agriculture fostered the great cattle industry with its million-acre ranches, its thousand-mile drives up the trail to northern markets, and its immortal cowboy who still rides and sings in motion-picture houses all over the world, half a century after the free open range that gave him his magnificence has passed away forever. The majestic timbered slopes of the Northwest predestined that country to be the lumberman's paradise, still recalled in the legends of Paul Bunyan and the songs of the lumberjack. The gold in the Sierras and the Rockies inevitably brought the boom mining town, the floating population, the rough, unsteady life that Mark Twain immortalized in *Roughing It* and that Bret Harte handled a bit more tenderly in many of his short stories. That Western gold was also responsible for the existence of the stagecoach and of the Pony Express, beloved core of fanciful legends; for the prospect of sudden wealth drew great numbers to the gold fields long before the country in between was settled, and men lately come from the East in search of fortune were willing to pay high for a letter from home. The fertile, open plains were naturally set to the plow and turned into farms, but farmers on the bare prairies with never a tree in sight could not live in the log cabins they had known farther east. They lived in dugouts or sod shanties. The land along the upper Mississippi and the Missouri, bleak with bitter cold and biting winds, was really settled only when the Scandinavian and German immigrants



began to pour in after the war. Cold was no barrier to them. The nature of the land even played its part in the last sad chapter of the Indians. If the white men looked on their land and found it good, dispossession was sure to follow; and the Indians were pinched into smaller and smaller reservations on poorer and poorer land.

Just as the rocky, wooded land, swift streams, and indented coast line of New England had turned the Puritans into manufacturers and shippers rather than farmers, and the luxuriant river valleys of Virginia and Carolina developed a society of rich planters, so the Western land and its special blessings shaped the lives of later Americans as they spread across the continent.

**Literature of the late frontier.** Always the frontier was a rich source of folk literature and ballads. The lumbermen had their super-lumberjack, Paul Bunyan. The cowboys had Pecos Bill, who was "such a r'arin' broncobuster that he rode a cyclone down." Negro laborers along the Mississippi created John Henry, the strapping giant from the Black River country "whar de sun don't nebber shine." The legends of all three have been collected into very readable modern books. The folk songs, too, have been cherished and garnered, and now rest on library shelves all over America. Perhaps we come nearer to the people themselves in these products of their scanty leisure time around the campfire or the fireplace than in any writing about them. Certainly this lore holds great charm for all classes of readers.

The literary gods of the mining camps are Mark Twain and Bret Harte, whom you have already met. (See pages 1142 and 1144 for further discussion of their lives and works.) Eugene Field, who worked for a while on a Denver paper, put sketches of the mining towns into rollicking dialect verse.

The chroniclers of the cowboy are myriad, but all too few cowboy stories have the stamp of great literature. The very features of action and violence that have endeared ranch life to the readers of pulp magazines have tempted most writers to exaggerate the surface and neglect the real men who wore chaps and ten-gallon hats. One of the great favorites for years has been Owen Wister's *The Virginian* (1902). Only lately has the one real cowboy who later in life turned writer begun to come into public favor — Andy Adams, author of *The Log of a Cowboy* (1903), a faithful and far from dull account of a real trip "up the trail." But the cattle ranch and trail are still waiting for a man who can give them in literature the rank they have in popular favor.

## THE PONY EXPRESS

*by* ARTHUR VERNON

Second only to the cowboy in favor with the writers of "Wild West" is the Pony Express rider, and a romantic figure he is — in fiction. In reality he was a very hard-working young man rather than a dashing knight of the plains. According to Arthur Vernon, who wrote this account of the Pony Express as a chapter of his book *The History and Romance of the Horse* (1939), the real hero was not the rider but his mount. But even to a man with his eye on the horse, the exploits of these first carriers of the mail to California deserve plenty of admiration. Vernon tells his story too fully to need any further introduction.

THE MOST famous and one of the shortest-lived transport systems that the world has ever known was born of the vision and stubbornness of William H. Russell, of the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company. Russell was willing to stake a considerable investment on his conviction that fast mail service to California could be established by having a chain of stations stretched across the central route, via Denver and Salt Lake City. Each station would keep a horse, on which the courier would jump as soon as he rode up with his tired horse. Some stations would have new riders, too, to replace the tired courier.

There have been many arguments as to who invented the Pony Express. Anyone who rode a horse from Missouri to California may have thought of it. Some may have put it in practice. But Russell really established it as a regular service, even if it did last only eighteen months and, in spite of the postage rate of five dollars per half ounce, was a commercial failure.

Russell bought five hundred horses for the new mail service, paying almost a hundred thousand dollars for them. They were not ponies, but the fleetest and toughest horses that Russell could find in California and Iowa. He picked his riders with the same care, choosing wiry young men, most of them weighing under a hundred and twenty-five pounds. The Pony Express couriers were employed as horsemen and not as soldiers or adventurers. Anyone with a hero complex was thrown out before he started. Russell would rather have riders run ahead of the Indians than have them act heroic and take pot shots at them. He was paying them fifty dollars a month and found <sup>1</sup> to get the mail through and not to kill off Indians on the way.

<sup>1</sup> found: food, lodging, and necessary supplies.

Eighty men were picked to carry the mail, although the number of old men in reminiscent moods now would lead one to believe that there must have been eight thousand. Russell put them on their honor instead of giving them a civil-service examination, but he made them take an oath, "before the Great and Living God," that they would not "use profane language," would not drink liquor, and would not "fight or quarrel with any employee of the firm."

Russell's five hundred horses were distributed between the one hundred and ninety relay stations that dotted the route between St. Joseph, Missouri, and San Francisco. Usually there were two men in attendance at each station, the job of the stationman being just as dangerous as the rider's. The relay stations were at twelve-mile intervals, more or less, and the rider received a new horse at each one; but he himself had to keep on duty through three of the stations and was allowed only two minutes to remount at each stop. When the road discovered that it was losing money at too fast a rate, the riders had to keep going through eight stations. Sometimes, when things went wrong and no relief rider was available, one rider had to keep to his saddle for three and four hundred miles. The mail had to go through.

The mail was limited to what is now first-class matter. Most people, even when the rate nose-dived down to a dollar per half ounce, wrote their letters on tissue paper in order to get their money's worth. The mail was carried in four small pocketlike bags, which were sewn on a leather flap strapped to the saddle. As long as a patron could pay the postage, he could send mail up to twenty pounds in weight — although the Pony Express would then have an extra mail to carry it. The record weight, however, seems to have been around two and a half ounces, which cost the sender about twenty-five dollars.

The hero of the Pony Express was not the rider but the horse. Without a horse, the rider could never hope to get the mail through. Without the rider, some horses actually did get it through to the next station. Perhaps that was the reason why Russell, who had great faith in horses, made the horse wear the mail pockets rather than the rider bear them. If the riders were the stoutest men that ever busted a bronco, the horses were ten times tougher.

They were not far removed from the American wild horse, the proud creature of the prairies that went off alone to die rather than admit defeat. They were trained to nothing except to run through every kind of hell in the face of every sort of danger. The blacksmiths at the relay stations could never deal with mail ponies single-handed.

One man had to lasso the horse and throw it to the ground before the blacksmith could approach it. Then, throughout the entire time, often three or four hours, that the blacksmith was working on it, the second man had to sit on the horse's head to keep it down.

The relationship between the horses and the riders of the Pony Express was not the usual sort that existed between the horseman and his mount. The Pony Express rider had to be equally at home on the backs of five hundred horses. And the horses had to be equally effective at the hands of any one of eighty riders. When a rider pounded up to a relay station, he did not know what horse would carry him over the next lap. Often he had to ask its name, although toward the close of the Pony Express days most riders knew most horses. The horse, however, usually ran no more than twelve or fifteen miles a day, which explains the speed with which the mail was rushed through to California. Ordinarily, too, the horse's route was the same from day to day. One day its course was from east to west; twenty-four hours later another rider took it back again to the eastern station.

The Pony Express, in accordance with the principle of its organizer, was not concerned with knocking Indians out of its path. If hostile Indians approached the rider, attempted to ambush him or pursue him, he did not stop to argue or fight. He goaded his horse and gave them a race in which he was almost always the winner. No Indian changed to a fresh horse at regular intervals.

The first ride of the Pony Express was begun on the afternoon of April 3, 1860. It actually began from Sacramento the next morning, for the mail was shipped by boat from San Francisco. But the latter city was ungainly and awkwardly self-important, and wanted the honor for itself. So they dressed up a little yellow horse in bunting and flags and made themselves believe that it was launching the new rapid service when, as a matter of fact, it was just trotting down to the docks. The little horse was merely a publicity gesture and never saw the trail over which the Pony Express was charted.

The publicity horse was standing outside the Montgomery Street offices of the Alta Telegraph Company at noon. It was still there at four o'clock. San Francisco had a traditional love for celebrations. It had also a love for horses. This event represented a rare opportunity for the people of the cocky little city to indulge both. The little yellow horse stood outside the telegraph office for three hours, draped in the bunting and wearing flags in its headgear. For three hours at least it was the most important animal in San Francisco. Yet the celebration in honor of an institution in which it represented the

leading actors was not a sober one, not even a serious one. The newspapers realized the importance of the new service about to be inaugurated and also that of the horse. But they did not hesitate to poke gentle fun at the gaily bedecked animal in Montgomery Street.

From one o'clock to the hour of our going to press [wrote the San Francisco *Bulletin*] a clean-limbed, hardy little nankeen-colored<sup>1</sup> pony stood at the door of the Alta Telegraph Company's office — the pioneer pony of the famous express which today begins its first trip across the continent. Personally he will make short work and probably be back tonight, but by proxy he will put the West behind his heels like a very Puck and be in New York thirteen days from this writing.

But the little horse fooled them, and was not back that night at all. Shortly before four o'clock some dignitary emerged from the office of the Alta Telegraph Company with flat pouches containing a total of eighty-five letters and affixed them to the horse's saddle. Montgomery Street was thronged with admiring and appreciative, though not altogether respectful, well-wishers. The little horse turned its flag-crested head to see what was being done to it. As it looked to the left, a strange thing happened: the rider mounted from the right. The horse shied at the unorthodox procedure, and the charmingly bald newspapers of San Francisco commented on it the next day. "An old hand at the business," they called the rider, "and evidently quite at home in the saddle, though he did get up on the wrong side in his excitement."

The horse, having stood in its decorations all day to be admired by the passing populace, did not get too excited over the rider's excitement. It answered his spurring, which, if it were as exceptional as his mounting, would have caused the horse to revolt, by darting at a courageously furious pace down Montgomery Street, the pounding echo of its clattering hoofs mixing with the shouts of the crowd. The little horse, with its four hundred and eighty-five dollars' worth of mail attached to its saddle, sped on past the crude buildings to the water front, ran down the wharf, and trotted right up the gangplank onto the steamboat, which welcomed the mail with a shrill round of whistles.

The horse and its rider did not leave the boat but, for sentiment's sake, made the ten-hour voyage to Sacramento, where the Pony Express really began. It was two o'clock in the morning when the boat docked, and there was no sign of the cheering populace that had witnessed the inauguration of the mail at the San Francisco end. It was

<sup>1</sup> nankeen-colored: light buff-colored, more often called "rawhide."

one of the most dismal of April nights, the rain coming down in a fine, cold drizzle, and pitch-black. No delegation stood at the wharf to celebrate the opening of the Pony Express's brief but remarkable career. A rider waited, standing beside a wiry California mustang, stamping the rough floor of the dock and ready for the mad ten-mile-an-hour ride through the darkness and the rain to the first relay station, which hovered among the foothills fifteen miles to the east.

Those first fifteen miles, though far from the hardest lap, were the most crucial. The success of the venture would be measured in the eyes of the public by the ability of the horse on this first lap of the first run. The night was not auspicious, for there was no moonlight, no visibility, and not even dry roads. But the horse had to put the miles behind in record time, since the rougher stretches could not possibly admit quicker passage than scheduled. Already there were rumors of snowfalls in the Sierra Nevadas.

William Hamilton, who rode the speeding horse over those first dark miles, reached the first relay station well on time, jumped from one horse in a matter of seconds, fastened the mail pouch on a fresh steed, and was away again before the stationman could exchange a word about the foulness of the weather. Three times he mounted fresh horses, the pounding of his horse's hoofs announcing his arrival like the fire of a machine gun long before the notes of his horn floated through the night to the successive stations. Always the Pony Express rider blew the horn as he approached the relay station; but the stationmen always heard the rapid clatter of hoofs before the horn was raised to his lips.

In the faint, silent dawn of a misty day, Hamilton rushed into the foothill settlement of Placerville. It was fifteen minutes before seven and over half an hour before his arrival was scheduled. Nevertheless, there was a nucleus of cheerers up and shouting as, for the last time, he changed horses and raced off again over the rain-soaked roads. It was little more than an hour later when Bill Hamilton reached the end of his turn, further ahead of schedule than the drizzle and wet, puddle-perforated roads would ever have allowed were it not for those madly charging California horses that bore him in long leaping strides over the ground.

The toughest lap of the whole trail, however, lay ahead for the second rider: the snow-covered Sierras, where three or four stages were already bound fast and unable to move forward or backward. In San Francisco, where the people were as anxious to gamble as they were to celebrate, bets were liberally placed that the Pony Express might go

as far as the mountains, maybe even on time, but that it would never be heard of again once it hit the mountain trail. The fresh horses were, to be sure, scattered over the trail at the relay stations, which were well furnished with supplies, for pack trains of mules had already set up the stations. But no one knew whether those remounts would ever be called for or not. Anything could happen to a lone rider attempting to penetrate drifts already pronounced insurpassable by tried hands at the reins over that same trail.

The man who rode the express over the trail was Warren Upson of Sacramento; and if any single man deserved more credit than any other for the success of the venture as a practical system of communication, it was he. Upson's eighty-five-mile run was nothing less than an ordeal calling for the last iota of will power that he could summon and the last store of endurance that he could draw from his mount.

The mountain trail was not only buried in snow, all the familiar markings hopelessly blanketed, but it was also getting the tail-end lashing of a blinding blizzard. All day he battled a forty-one-mile path through the storm on a short, rugged horse. Even to the Pony Express, speed was a dangerous luxury on that first trip through the Sierras. A horse sturdy enough to plow the deep drifts, to keep its footing on the verge of crevices, and to stand the full force of the gale in its face was infinitely more necessary than a fleet animal.

One horse carried Upson over the first twenty miles of the mountain trail. Neither horse nor rider could see more than a yard ahead, for the snow that fell merged in the falling with the drifts already amassed. The horse forged its way ahead a few rods, and then Upson, fearful of the canyons, dismounted to lead the animal past the danger spots. The wind alone would have held them back, even if the trail were not snowbound. It whistled down the slopes, around crags, and through the passes, hurling sleet and snow against the lonely rider and his plucky little horse. There must have been hours on that heroic ride when even Upson doubted that the Pony Express would go through.

But, although it took twelve hours to cover the first forty miles, the express did pass the mountains; and Upson sped across the Nevada side, with fresh horses, at a pace no slower than a new rider would have gone. By midnight, when he himself rested at Carson City, the eastbound mail was safely on its way to Missouri. The dangers east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains were considerably less, the terrain less punishing, and the speed more consistent. The first Pony Express mail from the West was in Salt Lake City at midnight on April 7.

The first westbound mail, which had left the hearty little city of St. Joseph, Missouri, on the same day, April 3, that the yellow horse boarded the steamer at San Francisco, arrived at Salt Lake City two days later. St. Joseph was the crossroads of the West. In the pioneering days it was the last chance to buy general supplies. When the railways were constructed, it was the last stopping place — which is why the Pony Express ended there instead of at St. Louis.

The westbound mail was due from the East, via the St. Joseph and Hannibal Railroad, at five o'clock on April 3. The whole town, intoxicated both with spirits and spirit, overwhelmingly proud that St. Joseph had been chosen as the eastern terminus of the great experiment, was at the railroad station. Everyone was waiting for Ad Clark, nerviest engineer on the line, to speed the engine up from Hannibal in record time. Ad was a delicate mixture of madman and genius at the throttle. Rumors floated around St. Joseph that the train would be hours late in leaving Hannibal, but not a man was so drunk that he doubted that Ad Clark would push it through on schedule. Ad Clark did better than that, although his brass-plated, highly ornate, wood-burning engine did not reach St. Joseph until seven-thirty. The fault, however, was not the St. Joseph and Hannibal Railroad's. The train from Detroit was late, making Ad Clark so mad that, when he finally did start, he went the two hundred and ten miles to St. Joseph in five hours and fifty minutes, averaging thirty-five miles an hour over rickety tracks.

To kill time between the scheduled and actual time of the arrival of Ad Clark's engine and the departure of the horse on the first westward lap of the Pony Express, everybody made speeches or listened to speeches. The mayor of St. Joseph, a long, lank man who was always whittling and who was never seen in public without a ten-gallon hat, relieved himself of the prophecy that the cloud of dust shortly to be kicked up across the plains by the flying hoofs of the Pony Express would soon be the puff of steam from locomotives that would link the West with the East forever. Nobody paid much attention to the speeches. They were busy gaping down the tracks for the first faint chugs of Ad Clark's wood burner, plucking souvenir hairs from the tail of the waiting Pony Express horse or congratulating themselves on being alive in such stirring times.

At last the speeches were over, though they had been drawn out as long as possible to keep the crowd at the depot. The brass band, somewhat wearily, did justice to repeated selections until the veins stood out on the members' foreheads. J. W. Richardson, the express



rider, observing his horse's thinning mane and depleted tail, rode it back to the stable. Mayor Thompson, his homely face towering above the crowd, made some more informal speeches while the band gasped for breath. Then the band tooted some more tunes while Mayor Thompson gasped for breath. Finally, when evening had fallen over the rough river town, Ad Clark, both his engine and his passengers also gasping, steamed his flamboyant boiler around the bend, the great flying sparks announcing his arrival before the engine could be heard or seen. Someone raced to the stable to tell Richardson.

In the Missouri twilight Mayor Thompson fastened the mail cantinas to the saddle of the horse, Richardson mounted in one leap, and the Pony Express was off to a westward start, the first lap in the greatest relay race against time that the world has known.

Nine days later a rider charged up to the relay station at Carson City. There Warren Upson waited, ready to take the mail over the Sierras again. Though the storm had lifted, the snows still blocked and hid the trail, but Upson sped through, worming his way between the lumbering wagon trains that had begun to move slowly after days of being snowbound. And the mail was in Sacramento on the afternoon of April 13, where the populace lined the streets, draped themselves on the rooftops, and shouted themselves hoarse to the accompaniment of discharged cannon fireworks and church bells. In ten days the mail had been rushed across the Great American Desert.

As a commercial venture, the Pony Express was a failure. The operating company may have got back the price of its horses, but its receipts totaled no more than a fifth of the half million dollars that its operators invested in it. As an experiment in consistent speed, however, it was eminently successful. Although its career was brief, its eighteen-month existence was enough to raise it to the dignity of a national institution. More literature, some good, some bad, and most indifferent, has been devoted to the glamorous doggedness of the Pony Express than to any other episode in the history of transportation.

Writers of the dime novel loved the Pony Express, and usually managed to get everything about it wrong. The nickel-a-thrill boys made the express riders a cross between Daniel Boone and the Lone Ranger, with a fairly liberal and anachronistic dose of the chivalrous knight thrown in for good measure. As a matter of cold fact, the riders were as unromantic as plane geometry, as anxious to avoid a fight as an anemic rabbit, and as apt to go off the beaten track as a street-car wheel. They were paid employees of a business whose function

was to get a few pounds of letters from one place to another on a very limited schedule.

The glamour lay in the fact that the two places were nearly two thousand miles apart, that the route was hazardous, and that it took eighty men and five hundred horses to keep the mails on the move. In real literature dealing with the Pony Express there is an awareness on the part of the author that the service was at least as dependent on the horses as the men, that the former went as fast as they could, and that the latter made it their primary object to go over their sections of the run with a strictly businesslike intention of not stopping for anything, whether a girl about to be fed to a circular saw or a tribe of Indians on the warpath.

Mark Twain, who came from Hannibal, Missouri, best described the Pony Express.

In a little while [he wrote in *Roughing It*] all interest was taken up in stretching our necks and watching for the pony rider — the fleet messenger who sped across the continent from St. Joe to Sacramento, carrying letters nineteen hundred miles in eight days! Think of that for perishable horse and human flesh and blood to do! The pony rider was usually a little bit of a man, brimful of spirit and endurance. No matter what the time of day or night his watch came on, and no matter whether it was winter or summer, raining, snowing, hailing or sleeting, or whether his beat was a level, straight road or a crazy trail over mountain crags and precipices, or whether it led through peaceful regions or regions that swarmed with hostile Indians, he must be always ready to leap into the saddle and be off like the wind! There was no idling time for a pony rider on duty. He rode fifty miles without stopping, by daylight, moonlight or starlight, or through the blackness of darkness — just as it happened. He rode a splendid horse that was born for a racer and fed and lodged like a gentleman, kept him at his utmost speed for ten miles, and then he came crashing up to the station where stood two men, holding a fast, impatient steed; the transfer of rider and mailbag was made in the twinkling of an eye, and away flew the eager pair and were out of sight before the spectator could get hardly the ghost of a look. Both rider and horse went “flying light.” The rider’s dress was thin and fitted close; he wore a roundabout and a skullcap and tucked his pantaloons in his boottops like a race rider. He carried no arms — he carried nothing that was not absolutely necessary, for even the postage on his literary freight was worth five dollars a letter. He got little frivolous correspondence to carry — his bag had business letters in it mostly. His horse was stripped of all unnecessary weight too. He wore a little wafer of a racing saddle and no visible blanket. He wore light shoes, or none at all. The little flat mail pockets, strapped under the rider’s thighs, would each hold the bulk of a child’s primer. They held

many and many an important business chapter and newspaper letter, but these were written on paper as light and airy and thin as gold leaf, nearly, and thus bulk and weight were economized. The stagecoach traveled about a hundred to a hundred and twenty-five miles a day (twenty-four hours), the pony rider about two hundred and fifty. There were about eighty pony riders in the saddle all the time, night and day, stretching in a long procession from Missouri to California, forty flying eastward and forty toward the West, and among them making four hundred gallant horses earn a stirring livelihood and see a good deal of scenery every single day in the year.

We had a consuming desire, from the beginning, to see a pony rider, but somehow or other all that had passed us and all that met us managed to streak by in the night; so we heard only a whiz and a hail, and the swift phantom of the desert was gone before we could get our heads out of the windows. But now we were expecting one along every moment, and would see him in broad daylight. Presently the driver exclaims: "Here he comes!"

Every neck is stretched further and every eye strained wider. Away across the endless dead level of the prairie a black speck appears against the sky, and it is plain that it moves. Well, I should think so! In a second or two it becomes a horse and rider, rising and falling, rising and falling — sweeping toward us nearer and nearer — growing more and more distinct, more and more sharply defined — nearer and nearer still, and the flutter of hoofs comes faintly to the ear — another instant and a whoop and a hurrah from our upper deck, a wave of the rider's hand, but no reply, and man and horse burst past our excited faces and go swinging away like the belated fragment of a storm.

So sudden is it all, and so like a flash of unreal fancy, that but for the flake of white foam left quivering and perishing on a mail sack after the vision had flashed by and disappeared we might have doubted whether we had seen any actual horse and man at all, maybe.

Mark Twain saw the real Pony Express, the courier mounted on a swift horse, both intent on eating up the miles. It was hard work, hard on the riders and hard on their horses. Occasionally a rider fell exhausted in his saddle, and the horse sped on to the next relay station of its own accord. Once when a rider was fatally shot by Indians, the horse did not swerve from its path or lessen its furious pace but carried its rider's body and the mail through to the next station. Another horse, riderless, swam a stream, tore a lane through a mob that attempted to stop it, and raced on to the next outpost.

The horses that bore the Pony Express mails would probably have come out at the short end in any horse show. They were not beautiful. Scrawny and graceless, most of them never stopped bucking until they died. But the riders spurred them effectively as soon as they were

mounted, and they were off like a shot. They combined the speed of the race horse with the sure-footedness of a mule and the beauty of a bronco's gangling shape. If they were the most courageous and indefatigable horses that ever lived, they were also the hardest-worked. And when the telegraph, the railroad, and the Civil War put the express out of business, most of the horses were ready to die. Most of the riders had lasted only a few weeks.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Do you find any justification for the author's claim that the pony, not the rider, was the real hero of the Pony Express? Do you feel that the riders had some heroic qualities too?
2. Figure up how much air mail could be carried for the price of one ounce of Pony Express mail. Find out from an air-line schedule or ask someone at your post office how long it now takes mail to get from Missouri to California.
3. Were any of your former ideas about the Pony Express changed by reading this account? What were the changes?

### *For Your Vocabulary*

4. The first lap of the Pony Express run from the West was *crucial* (page 1077) only because of the pressure of time, for the severe test of the Sierra Nevada trail better deserved the description. *Crucial* means exceedingly trying and severe. The word comes from one meaning *cross*, which gives us *crucifixion*. Another shade of meaning in *crucial* is deciding between two important possibilities, in this case success or failure. The first run was *crucial* partly because the night was not *auspicious* (page 1077), not distinguished by good omens. In olden times the word was used of the omens of good fortune discovered by the pagan priests, but we now use it for such omens as any man's intelligence can discover. If your father is in a bad humor about last month's bills, the time is not *auspicious* for discussion of an increase in your allowance.

### *For Ambitious Students*

5. Draw a map showing the territory covered by the Pony Express. Mark the location of all places mentioned in the selection.
6. The book from which this chapter was taken has another chapter entitled "The Horse Goes West," which also tells much about the frontier while following the part the horse played. You would enjoy reading it. There is a chapter on the horse in Hollywood, too, which is highly amusing.

## THE COWBOY'S DREAM

## COWBOY SONG, TO THE AIR OF

## "MY BONNIE LIES OVER THE OCEAN"

The cowboys' songs were not just a diversion for idle hours around the chuck wagon or the bunkhouse. They learned early that singing kept the cattle quiet on their bedding grounds at night and helped to prevent stampedes. Other songs of the "Git along, little dogies" variety were sung to relieve the dusty job of prodding up the laggards, or "drags," at the end of the trail herd, the high points of the refrain coming up to a yell as a rope flicked at a slow calf: "Whoopee tí, yí yó, git a-lóing, little dó-gies."

The young American of today who gets his ideas of the cowboy from the typical Western movie has a very one-sided and distorted picture indeed. The songs of the cowboy, which have been collected by John A. Lomax into *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* and *Songs of the Cattle Trail and Cow Camp*, reveal the true cowboy to us. He was a hard-working fellow, different from the familiar movie hero, who seems never to have any real work to do but is always free to scour the country to rescue maidens in distress or rid the community of Eastern villains. Most of the songs in the books are mournful, because the cowboy was often far from home and homesick — and also because slow, sad tunes seemed to soothe the cattle. The songs often touch on a simple religious faith reminiscent of their boyhood homes. Perhaps the outstanding qualities of the cowboy songs are their masculine vitality and direct, simple honesty, notable traits of their makers.

1. Last night as I lay on the prairie,  
And looked at the stars in the sky,  
I wondered if ever a cowboy  
Would drift to that sweet by and by.

*Chorus:*

Roll on, roll on;  
Roll on, little dogies, roll on, roll on,  
Roll on, roll on;  
Roll on, little dogies, roll on.

2. The road to that bright, happy region  
Is a dim, narrow trail, so they say;  
But the broad one that leads to perdition  
Is posted and blazed all the way.

3. They say there will be a great roundup,  
And cowboys, like dogies, will stand,  
To be marked by the Riders of Judgment  
Who are posted and know every brand.
4. I know there's many a stray cowboy  
Who'll be lost at the great, final sale,  
When he might have gone in the green pastures  
Had he known of the dim, narrow trail.
5. I wonder if ever a cowboy  
Stood ready for that Judgment Day,  
And could say to the Boss of the Riders,  
"I'm ready, come drive me away."
6. For they, like the cows that are locoed,  
Stampede at the sight of a hand,  
Are dragged with a rope to the roundup,  
Or get marked with some crooked man's brand.
7. And I'm scared that I'll be a stray yearling —  
A maverick, unbranded on high —  
And get cut in the bunch with the "rusties"  
When the Boss of the Riders goes by.
8. For they tell of another big owner  
Who's ne'er overstocked, so they say,  
But who always makes room for the sinner  
Who drifts from the strait, narrow way.
9. They say he will never forget you,  
That he knows every action and look;  
So, for safety, you'd better get branded,  
Have your name in the great Tally Book.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What big event in life on the range is used for the basis of this song? How well does the comparison with the Judgment Day fit? Give details
2. One cowboy usually sang a verse, and then all the group, if they were around the fire or in the bunkhouse, joined in the chorus. Sometimes each fellow in the circle took his turn at singing the stanzas. Try the song this way in class.
3. Vocabulary: dogies, blazed, roundup, locoed, yearling, maverick, cut, rusties, Tally Book.

*For Ambitious Students*

4 Get a book of cowboy songs and find some that deal with their other activities. See if you can find any gay ones. See if they had any songs complaining of their jobs. Plan a program of cowboy songs to be presented in class.

## THE LITTLE OLD SOD SHANTY

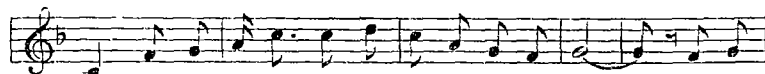
## PIONEER BALLAD

Wherever men go and however they live, sooner or later their country and their life eventually crop out in their songs. Carl Sandburg printed in his *American Songbag* this ballad from the bare Western prairies, with this little introduction:

"A little girl from western Nebraska, home again after a trip to the East, was asked, 'What is the East?' She answered, 'The East is where trees come between you and the sky.' Early settlers noticed log cabins were scarcer as timberland thinned out going farther west. On the windy open prairies of the Great Plains, the best house to be had in short order was of sod. A cellar was dug first, long slices of turf were piled around the cellar lines, wooden crosspoles held the sod roof. Ceilings went high or low, tall men put roofs farther from the ground than short men did. In timber country farther east they sang 'The Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane', its tune was familiar to the lonely 'sodbuster' who made this song about his dwelling—in a region where rivers are sometimes a half mile wide and a half inch deep."



{ I am look-ing rath-er seed-y now while hold-ing down my  
{ Yet I rath-er like the no-vel-ty of liv-ing in this



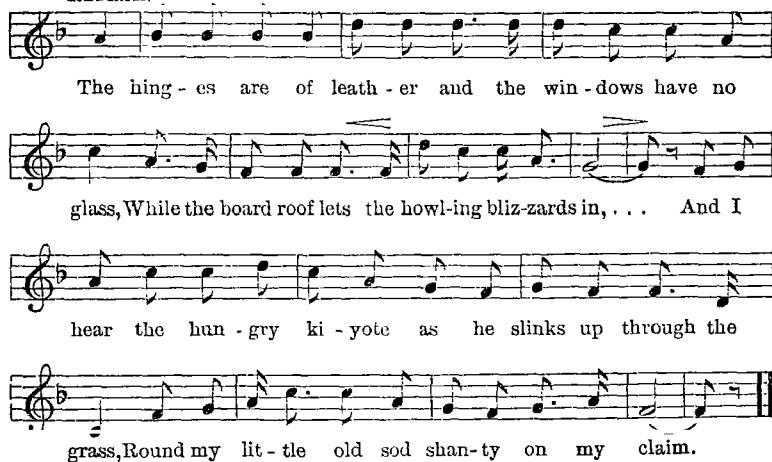
claim, And my vict-u-als are not al-ways of the best, . . And the  
way, Though my bill of fare is al-ways rath-er tame, But I'm



mice play shy-ly round me as I nes-tle down to rest, In my  
hap-py as a clam on the land of Un-cle Sam, In my



## REFRAIN



2. O when I left my Eastern home, a bachelor so gay,  
To try and win my way to wealth and fame,  
I little thought that I'd come down to burning twisted hay  
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.  
My clothes are plastered o'er with dough, I'm looking like a fright,  
And everything is scattered round the room,  
But I wouldn't give the freedom that I have out in the West  
For the table of the Eastern man's old home.
  
3. Still I wish that some kindhearted girl would pity on me take,  
And relieve me from the mess that I am in;  
The angel, how I'd bless her if this her home she'd make  
In the little old sod shanty on my claim.  
And we would make our fortunes on the prairies of the West,  
Just as happy as two lovers we'd remain;  
We'd forget the trials and troubles we endured at the first,  
In the little old sod shanty on our claim.



4. And if kindly fate should bless us with now and then an heir,  
To cheer our hearts with honest pride of fame,  
O then we'd be contented for the toil that we had spent  
In the little old sod shanty on our claim.  
When time enough had lapsed and all of those little brats  
To noble man- and womanhood had grown,  
It wouldn't seem half so lonely as around us we should look,  
And see the little old sod shanty on our claim.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Can you give a detailed description of the little old sod shanty? What peculiar disadvantages does it have? What does the settler have with his shanty that makes him prefer it to "the table of the Eastern man's old home"?
2. What detail most impresses you with the fact that this song came from a treeless country?
3. What is the settler's one wish? Do you think he will get it? Will he be happy if he does?
4. Is the tone of the poem as a whole more cheerful or plaintive? What effect does the tune have on the mood?

## PRAIRIE DOOM

*from* GIANTS IN THE EARTH

*by* OLE E. RÖLVAAG (1876-1931)

The finest picture we have of the pioneers who settled the vast prairie lands of the Northwest after the War between the States was written by a man who himself experienced the hard life of an immigrant. The first twenty years of Ole E. Rølvaag's life were spent among the Norwegian fishing villages near the Arctic circle. He had little schooling, partly because the long nights reduced the school year to nine weeks, and partly because at fourteen he was not considered worth further education. At twenty he landed in New York with only a dime and a loaf of bread. Half a continent lay between him and his uncle's farm in South Dakota. Later he had a chance to attend St. Olaf College in Minnesota, where, after advanced study and travel, he remained for twenty-five years as professor of Norwegian.

His great novel *Giants in the Earth* was first written in Norwegian (in

which he expressed himself more naturally, though he spoke excellent English) and published in Norway. Two years later, in 1927, the American translation appeared. It was immediately hailed as a great book, beautiful in style, authentic in subject matter, and richly imbued with the heroism and tragedy of the frontier. The story was based on actual experiences of Rölvaag's forebears in the early Dakota days. The quiet deliberation of the telling, and the insight into the minds of the characters remind one of the old Norwegian sagas.

The days of the covered wagon are made to live again for us in the following chapter from *Giants in the Earth*. The family in the novel consists of Per Hansa, the father; Beret, the mother; and their four children. At this point in the story they have completed their long journey from the East and are settled in a sod house in Dakota. But the great wave of settlers is constantly coming on from the East, and passing them for points farther west. Hardship and tragedy often ride with the caravans. Neighborliness and generosity are frequently called upon to help exhausted travelers. In those days every man's house had to be an inn. Along with independence and individualism, the pioneers had to develop the spirit of co-operation. Otherwise they could not have survived.

THAT SUMMER many land seekers passed through the settlement on their way west. The arrival of a caravan was always an event of the greatest importance. How exciting they were, those little ships of the Great Plain! The prairie schooners, rigged with canvas tops which gleamed whitely in the shimmering light, first became visible as tiny specks against the eastern sky; one might almost imagine them to be sea gulls perched far, far away on an endless green meadow; but as one continued to watch, the white dots grew; they came drifting across the prairie like the day; after long waiting, they gradually floated out of the haze, distinct and clear; then, as they drew near, they proved to be veritable wagons, with horses hitched ahead, with folk and all their possessions inside, and a whole herd of cattle following behind.

The caravan would crawl slowly into the settlement and come to anchor in front of one of the sod houses; the moment it halted, people would swarm down and stretch themselves and begin to look after the teams; cattle would bellow; sheep would bleat as they ran about. Many queer races and costumes were to be seen in these caravans, and a babble of strange tongues shattered the air. Nut-brown youngsters, dressed only in a shirt and a pair of pants, would fly around between the huts, looking for other youngsters; an infant, its mother crooning softly to it, would sit securely perched in the fold of her arm; white-haired old men and women, who should have been living quietly at

home, preparing for a different journey, were also to be seen in the group, running about like youngsters; the daily jogging from sky line to sky line had brightened their eyes and quickened their tongues. All were busy; each had a thousand questions to ask; every last one of them was in high spirits, though they knew no other home than the wagon and the blue skies above.<sup>1</sup> . . . The Lord only could tell whence all these people had come and whither they were going! . . .

The caravan usually intended to stop only long enough for the womenfolk to boil coffee and get a fresh supply of water; but the starting was always delayed, for the men had so many questions to ask. Once in a while during these halts a fiddler would bring out his fiddle and play a tune or two, and then there would be dancing. Such instances were rare, but good cheer and excitement invariably accompanied these visits.

Why not settle right here? The Spring Creek folk would ask the west movers. . . . There's plenty of good land left — nothing better to be found between here and the Pacific Ocean!

No, not yet. They weren't quite ready to settle; these parts looked fairly crowded. . . . The farther west, the better. . . . They guessed they would have to go on a way, though this really looked pretty good! . . .

And so the caravans would roll onward into the green stillness of the West. How strange — they vanished faster than they had appeared! The white sails grew smaller and smaller in the glow of the afternoon, until they had dwindled to nothing; the eye might seek them out there in the waning day, and search till it grew blurred, but all in vain — they were gone, and had left no trace! . . .

Foggy weather had now been hanging over the prairie for three whole days; a warm mist of rain mizzled continuously out of the low sky. Toward evening of the third day the fog lifted and clear sky again appeared; the setting sun burst through the cloud banks rolling up above the western horizon, and transformed them into marvelous fairy castles. . . . While this was going on, over to the northeast of the Solum boys' place a lonely wagon had crept into sight; it had almost reached the creek before anyone had noticed it, for the Solum boys were visiting among the Sognings, where there were many young people. But as Beret sat out in the yard, milking, the wagon crossed her view. When she brought in the milk, she remarked in her quiet

<sup>1</sup> In this selection the dots do not represent something omitted, but are used by the author, as often in poetry, to suggest a thoughtful pause and produce a slow-moving, meditative style.

manner that they were going to have company, at which tidings the rest of the family had to run out and see who might be coming at this time of day.

There was only one wagon, with two cows following behind; on the left side walked a brown-whiskered, stooping man — he was doing the driving; close behind him came a half-grown boy, dragging his feet heavily. The wagon at last crawled up the hill and came to a stop in Per Hansa's yard, where the whole family stood waiting.

"I don't suppose there are any Norwegians in this settlement? No, that would be too much to expect," said the man in a husky, worn-out voice.

"If you're looking for Norwegians, you have found the right place, all right! We sift the people as they pass through here — keep our own, and let the others go!" . . . Per Hansa wanted to run on, for he felt in high spirits; but he checked himself, observing that the man looked as if he stood on the very brink of the grave.

Was there any chance of putting up here for the night?

"Certainly! certainly!" cried Per Hansa briskly, "provided they were willing to take things as they were."

The man didn't answer but walked, instead, to the wagon and spoke to someone inside.

"Kari, now you must brace up and come down. Here we have found Norwegians at last!" As if fearing a contradiction, he added, "Ya, they are real Norwegians. I've talked with them."

On top of his words there came out of the wagon, first a puny boy with a hungry face, somewhat smaller than the other boy; then a girl of about the same size, but looking much older. She helped to get down another boy, about six years old, who evidently had been sleeping and looked cross and tired. That seemed to be all.

The man stepped closer to the wagon. "Aren't you coming, Kari?"

A groan sounded within the canvas. The girl grabbed hold of her father's arm. "You must untie the rope! Can't you remember *anything*?" she whispered angrily.

"Ya, that's right! Wait a minute till I come and help you."

An irresistible curiosity took hold of Per Hansa; in two jumps he stood on the tongue of the wagon. The sight that met his eyes sent chills running down his spine. Inside sat a woman on a pile of clothes, with her back against a large immigrant chest; around her wrists and leading to the handles of the chest a strong rope was tied; her face was drawn and unnatural. Per Hansa trembled so violently that he had

to catch hold of the wagon box, but inwardly he was swearing a steady stream. To him it looked as if the woman was crucified.

"For God's sake, man!" . . .

The stranger paid no attention; he was pottering about and pleading, "Come down now, Kari. . . . Ya, all right, I'll help you! Everything's going to be all right — I know it will! . . . Can you manage to get up?" He had untied the rope, and the woman had risen to her knees.

"O God!" she sighed, putting her hands to her head.

"Please come. That's right; I'll help you!" pleaded the man, as if he were trying to persuade a child.

She came down unsteadily. "Is this the place, Jakob?" she asked in a bewildered way. But now Beret ran up and put her arm around her; the women looked into each other's eyes and instantly a bond of understanding had been established. "You come with me!" urged Beret. . . . "O God! This isn't the place, either!" wailed the woman; but she followed Beret submissively into the house.

"Well, well!" sighed the man as he began to unhitch the horses. "Life isn't easy — no, it certainly isn't." . . .

Per Hansa watched him anxiously, hardly knowing what to do. Both the boys kept close to him. Then an idea flashed through his mind: "You boys run over to Hans Olsa's and tell him not to go to bed until I come. . . . No, I don't want him here. And you two stay over there tonight. Now run along!"

Turning to the man, he asked, "Aren't there any more in your party?"

"No, not now. We were five, you see, to begin with — five in all — but the others had to go on. . . . Haven't they been by here yet? Well, they must be somewhere over to the westward. . . . No, life isn't easy." . . . The man wandered on in his monotonous, blurred tone; he sounded all the time as if he were half sobbing.

"Where do you come from?" Per Hansa demanded gruffly.

The man didn't give a direct answer, but continued to ramble on in the same mournful way, stretching his story out interminably. . . . They had been wandering over the prairie for nearly six weeks. . . . Ya, it was a hard life. When they had started from Houston County, Minnesota, there had been five wagons in all. Strange that the others hadn't turned up here. Where could they be? It seemed to him as if he had traveled far enough to reach the ends of the earth! . . . Good God, what a nightmare life was! If he had only — only known! . . .

"Did the others go away and *leave you*?" Per Hansa hadn't intended to ask that question, but it had slipped out before he realized what he was saying. He wondered if there could be anything seriously wrong. . . .

"They couldn't possibly wait for us — couldn't have been expected to. Everything went wrong, you see, and I didn't know when I would be able to start again. . . . Turn the horses loose, John," he said to the boy. "Take the pail and see if you can squeeze some milk out of the cows. Poor beasts, they don't give much now!" Then he turned to Per Hansa again. "I don't know what would have become of us if we hadn't reached this place tonight! We'd have been in a bad hole, that I assure you! Womenfolk can't bear up." . . . The man stopped and blew his nose.

Per Hansa dreaded what might be coming next. "You must have got off your course, since you are coming down from the North?"

The man shook his head helplessly. "To tell the truth, I don't know where we've been these last few days. We couldn't see the sun."

"Haven't you got a compass?"

"Compass? No! I tried to steer with a rope, but the one I had wasn't long enough."

"You didn't!" exclaimed Per Hansa excitedly, full of a sudden new interest.

"Ya, I tried that rope idea — hitched it to the back of the wagon, and let it drag in the wet grass. But it didn't work — I couldn't steer straight with it. The rope was so short, and kept kinking around so much, that it didn't leave any wake."

"Uh-huh!" nodded Per Hansa wisely. "You must be a seafaring man, to have tried that trick!"

"No, I'm no sailor. But fisherfolk out here have told me that it's possible to steer by a rope. . . . I had to try *something*."

"Where did you cross the Sioux?"

"How do I know where I crossed it? We came to a river a long way to the east of here — that must have been the Sioux. We hunted and hunted before we could find a place shallow enough to cross. . . . God! this has certainly been a wandering in the desert for me! . . . But if Kari only gets better, I won't complain — though I never dreamed that life could be so hard." . . .

"Is she — is she *sick*, that woman of yours?"

The man did not answer this question immediately; he wiped his face with the sleeve of his shirt. When he spoke again, his voice had grown even more blurred and indistinct. "Physically she seems to

be as well as ever — as far as I can see. She certainly hasn't overworked since we've been traveling. I hope there's nothing wrong with her. . . . But certain things are hard to bear — I suppose it's worse for the mother, too — though the Lord knows it hasn't been easy for me, either! . . . You see, we had to leave our youngest boy out there on the prairie." . . .

"Leave him?" . . . These were the only two words that came to Per Hansa's mind.

"Ya, there he lies, our little boy! . . . I never saw a more promising man — you know what I mean — when he grew up. . . . But now — oh, well." . . .

Per Hansa felt faint in the pit of his stomach; his throat grew dry; his voice became as husky as that of the other; he came close up to him. "Tell me — how did this happen?"

The man shook his head again, in a sort of dumb despair. Then he cleared his throat and continued with great effort. "I can't tell how it happened! Fate just willed it so. Such things are not to be explained. . . . The boy had been ailing for some time — we knew that, but didn't pay much attention. We had other things to think of. . . . Then he began to fail fast. We were only one day's journey this side of Jackson; so we went back. That was the time when the others left us. I don't blame them much — it was uncertain when we could go on. . . . The doctor we found wasn't a capable man — I realize it now. He spoke only English and couldn't understand what I was saying. He had no idea what was wrong with the boy — I could see that plainly enough. . . . Ya, well — so we started again. . . . It isn't any use to fight against fate; that's an old saying, and a true one, too, I guess. . . . Before long we saw that the boy wasn't going to recover. So we hurried on, day and night, trying to catch our neighbors. . . . Well, that's about all of it. One night he was gone — just as if you had blown out a candle. Ya, let me see — that was five nights ago."

"Have you got him there in the wagon?" demanded Per Hansa, grabbing the man by the arm.

"No, no," he muttered huskily. "We buried him out there by a big stone — no coffin or anything. But Kari took the best skirt she had and wrapped it all around him — we had to do *something*, you know. . . . But," he continued, suddenly straightening up, "Paul cannot lie there! As soon as I find my neighbors, I'll go and get him. Otherwise Kari . . ." The man paused between the sobs that threatened to choke him. "I have had to tie her up the last few days. She

insisted on getting out and going back to Paul. I don't think she has had a wink of sleep for over a week. . . . It's just as I was saying — some people can't stand things." . . .

Per Hansa leaned heavily against the wagon. "Has she gone crazy?" he asked hoarsely.

"She isn't much worse than the rest of us. I don't believe . . . Kari is really a well-balanced woman . . . but you can imagine how it feels, to leave a child *that way*" . . .

The boy, John, had finished milking. He had put the pail down and was standing a little way off, listening to his father's story; suddenly he threw himself on the ground, sobbing as if in convulsions.

"John! John!" admonished the father. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself — a grown-up man like you! Take the milk and carry it into the house!"

"That's right!" echoed Per Hansa, pulling himself together. "We'd better all go in. There's shelter here, and plenty to eat."

Beret was bustling around the room when they entered; she had put the woman to bed, and now was tending her. "Where are the boys?" she asked.

Per Hansa told her that he had sent them to Hans Olsa's for the night.

"That was hardly necessary; we could have made room here somehow." Beret's voice carried a note of keen reproach.

The man had paused at the door; now he came over to the bed. took the limp hand, and muttered, "Poor soul! . . . Why, I believe she's asleep already!"

Beret came up and pushed him gently aside. "Be careful! Don't wake her. She needs the rest."

"Ya, I don't doubt it — not I! She hasn't slept for a week, you see — the poor soul!" With a loud sniff, he turned and left the room.

When suppertime came, the woman seemed to be engulfed in a stupefying sleep. Beret did not join the others at the supper table, but busied herself, instead, by trying to make the woman more comfortable; she loosened her clothes, took off her shoes, and washed her face in warm water; during all this the stranger never stirred. That done, Beret began to fix up sleeping quarters for the strangers — in the barn. She carried in fresh hay and brought out all the bedding she had; she herself would take care of the woman, in case she awoke and needed attention. Beret did little talking, but she went about these arrangements with a firmness and confidence that surprised her husband.



Per Hansa came in from the barn, after helping the strangers settle themselves for the night. Beret was sitting on the edge of the bed, dressing the baby for the night; she had put And-Ongen<sup>1</sup> to bed beside the distracted woman.

"Did she tell you much?" he asked in a low voice.

Beret glanced toward the other bed before she answered.

"Only that she had had to leave one of her children on the way. She wasn't able to talk connectedly."

"It's a terrible thing!" he said, looking away from his wife. "I think I'll go over to Hans Olsa's for a minute. I want to talk this matter over with him."

"Talk it over with him?" she repeated coldly. "I don't suppose Hans Olsa knows everything!"

"No, of course not. But these people have got to be helped, and we can't do it all alone." He hesitated for a minute, as if waiting for her consent. "Well, I won't be gone long," he said as he went out of the door.

When he returned, an hour later, she was still sitting on the edge of the bed, with the baby asleep on her lap. They sat in silence for a long while; at last he began to undress. She waited until he was in bed, then turned the lamp low and lay down herself, but without undressing. . . . The lamp shed only a faint light. It was so quiet in the room that one could hear the breathing of all the others. Beret lay there listening; though the room was still, it seemed alive to her with strange movements; she forced herself to open her eyes and look around. Noticing that Per Hansa wasn't asleep, either, she asked:

"Did you look after the boys?"

"Nothing the matter with them! They were fast asleep in Sofie's bed."

"You told them everything, at Hans Olsa's?"

"Of course!"

"What did they think of it?"

Per Hansa raised himself on his elbows and glanced at the broken creature lying in the bed back of theirs. The woman, apparently, had not stirred a muscle. "It's a bad business," he said. "We must try to get together a coffin and find the boy. We can't let him lie out there — that way." . . . As Beret made no answer, he briefly narrated the story that the man had told him. "The fellow is a good-for-nothing, stupid fool, I'm sure of that," concluded Per Hansa.

She listened to him in silence. For some time she brooded over

<sup>1</sup> And-Ongen: Beret's little daughter.

her thoughts; then in a bitter tone she suddenly burst out, "Now you can see that this kind of a life is impossible! It's beyond human endurance."

He had not the power to read her thoughts; he did not want to know them; tonight every nerve in his body was taut with apprehension and dismay. But he tried to say, reassuringly, "Hans Olsa and I will both go with the man, as soon as the day breaks. If we only had something to make the coffin of! The few pieces of board that I've got here will hardly be enough. . . . Now let's go to sleep. Be sure and call me if you need anything! "

He turned over resolutely, as if determined to sleep; but she noticed that he was a long time doing it. . . . I wonder what's going through his mind? she thought. She was glad to have him awake, just the same; tonight there were strange things abroad in the room. . . .

[Perhaps you would like to know what happens later to these unfortunate travelers. During the night the crazed woman, Kari, thinking she must search for the body of her little boy, seized And-Ongen, Beret's child, and carried her out on the prairie. When their absence was discovered, Per Hansa rushed out in pursuit and was able to bring them back before any harm was done except for the terror suffered by Per and Beret. The next day the neighbors made a little coffin, and two of the men started out with the strangers to try to find the child's body. After four days they returned with the little coffin still empty. Then the strangers started out again on their westward trek, and that is the last we hear of them in the story. The whole incident, however, is a foreshadowing of the mental darkness that settled over Beret toward the end of the novel.]

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Which hardships of pioneer days are more emphasized in this selection, the physical or the mental? What brighter side of the picture is given? Discuss the life of pioneers from all these angles.

2. How many different nationalities can you name that had a prominent part in the settlement of the West? Why were the Scandinavians particularly suited to build up the Northwest? How many of their characteristics can you gather from this selection?

#### *For Ambitious Students*

3. Make a list, either individually or as a class, of all the books you have read or the movies you have seen which picture the covered-wagon days. Discuss the impressions of prairie life you have gained from these in comparison with the selection from *Giants in the Earth*.

4. If you live in a community where it is possible to collect actual experiences of pioneers from the older residents, assemble these for a story-telling hour or to put in a booklet for the school library.

5. Where in our modern world have large-scale migrations taken place? Have most of these been voluntary or forced? Investigate some one of these and write an incident of a migrating family; try to make the characters come alive.

## AN AMERICAN HERCULES

by JAMES STEVENS (1892- )

The great contribution of the Northwestern lumber camps to American folklore is Paul Bunyan. James Stevens, who worked for many months in Washington and Oregon and Idaho lumber camps, was just the right person to put into permanent form the adventures of Paul Bunyan. This he has done in his book *Paul Bunyan*, which records many of the lively stories, including "The Winter of the Blue Snow" and "The Sourdough Drive." "The Black Duck Dinner," the greatest yarn of all, describes a feast so satisfying that after it not a single logger was able to appear for supper. One made an effort: at the call for supper "he appeared in the door of the bunkhouse, stared dully for a moment, and then staggered back into the darkness." After reading the descriptions of the groaning boards on this historic occasion, we wonder only that even one man had the courage to make the tiniest move toward more food that day.

In "An American Hercules" Mr. Stevens has written especially for *Adventures in American Literature* an account of the manner in which the Paul Bunyan legend has developed; he has followed this with a hitherto unrecorded yarn, almost, if not quite, the equal of "The Black Duck Dinner." In the introduction to his book *Paul Bunyan* Mr. Stevens says: "A Paul Bunyan bunkhouse service is a glory to hear, when it is spontaneous and in a proper setting; preferably around a big heated stove in the winter, when the wind is howling through crackling boughs outside and the pungent smell of steaming wool drifts down from the drying lines above the stove. When a vasty spirit of the woods really moves the meeting, a noble and expansive ecstasy of the soul is exhibited."

Draw up your chair, stranger.

PAUL BUNYAN, the mythical hero of the lumberjacks, is the supreme figure of American folklore. Paul was a Herculean logger who combed his beard with a young pine tree; who skidded his timber with Babe the Blue Ox, a creature so vast that he measured forty-two ax handles and a plug of chewing tobacco between the horns; who

operated a camp cookhouse where the flapjack griddle was greased by twenty-four Arabs — imported from the Sahara Desert because they could stand the heat — skating to and fro with slabs of bacon strapped to their feet; who tamed the Mississippi when it was young and wild by building river corrals and driving the river through their gates (the Great Lakes remain as evidence of this feat); who ruled the American country in the period when it was only a timberland. This epoch, according to the best authorities, began with the Winter of the Blue Snow and ended with the Spring the Rain Came Up from China.

Here, indeed, is a full-bodied myth. The Paul Bunyan stories have been told in American logging camps since 1840. They are unquestionably of Canadian origin. There was a Paul Bunyan who won fame in the Papineau Rebellion of 1837. There is no evidence that the beginnings of the stories are beyond him. The other materials and characters of the myth were developed out of the magic of bunk-house nights; when the workday in the woods, or on the iced road, or on the drive, was done; when the camp men, isolated from all life but that of the woods, had no other outlet for their fancies than the creation of romances about their own life.

Thus Paul Bunyan; Babe the Blue Ox; Johnny Inkslinger, the timekeeper who figured with a fountain pen fed by hose lines from twenty-four barrels of ink; Hels Helson, the Big Swede and bull of the woods, who muddied the Missouri River forever with one spring bath; and many smaller characters — such as Hot Biscuit Slim, the cook; Shanty Boy, the bard; and Big Ole, the blacksmith — have been celebrated in logging camps from Bangor, Maine, to Portland, Oregon. The tall tale, the “whopper,” is not confined, of course, to the lumber camps. It appears with the earliest accounts of the Appalachian pioneers. It is forever present in the best writings of Mark Twain. Other mythical heroes have won a certain fame, such as Tony Beaver of the Virginia mountains and Pecos Bill, the Southwestern *vaquero*<sup>1</sup> who once straddled a cyclone and rode it to a finish. But the myth of Paul Bunyan stands alone, possessing, as it does, its own time, place, and people.

The stories are told in this manner:

Supper is over in the logging camp, and the after-supper period of smoking and quiet is also done. A murmur of talk about the day's work rises from the gang around the heating stove. There is a strong smell of steaming wool from the drying lines. Blue pipe smoke drifts through the mellow light of the Rochester burners. A gust of frosty

<sup>1</sup> *vaquero*: cowpuncher.

air blows in whenever the bunkhouse door is opened. Some logger ventures the opinion that this will be the hardest winter this part of the country has ever known. Weather talk runs on until someone states solemnly that "the weather ain't what she used to be. Gettin' old now, the weather is. Take the Year of the Two Winters, in Paul Bunyan's time. Yes, sir. Then. That year two winters come all at once." . . .

Then there is a contest to see who can tell the tallest tale about cold weather in the day of Paul Bunyan.

Or it is a summer night, and the loggers are circling a smudge fire outside the bunkhouse. Mosquitoes swarm up from the swamp below camp. So mosquito stories are in order. Any man is free to invent new Paul Bunyan yarns himself, or he can repeat the stories heard from other bards. Occasionally some bard is so inspired that his creation is never forgotten, and becomes a permanent addition to the Paul Bunyan myth. Such is the story of the mammoth mosquitoes and their amazing experiences with Bum and Bill, Paul Bunyan's battling bees.

Here is the story.

It was in the Year of the Dry Summer that Paul Bunyan's loggers first encountered mosquitoes. That was the season Paul Bunyan invented thunder. Day after day, week after week, month after month, the great hero-leader of the loggers toiled through experiments with all the sounds he could imagine. Just as cows, pigs, dogs, hens, and ducks could be called, so could clouds be called, thought Paul Bunyan. Seventeen thousand various kinds of calls the great logger tried that summer before he hit on the sound of thunder. Then his labors were rewarded. Paul Bunyan had not thundered once before a stray cloud rolled up from the west. He thundered on, and by midnight so many clouds had gathered that the Dry Summer ended in a downpour that was a deluge instead of a rain. Ever since that parched season the weather has used the thunder which Paul Bunyan invented for it.

But Paul Bunyan had other troubles during this wretched summer. Time and again he had to quit his important labor of trying out sounds that would call up clouds, and attend to small bothers, plagues, and worries. The most troublesome of all these troubles was the invasion of mosquitoes.

The mammoth mosquitoes came from the Tall Wolf country. There the tribe had experienced a devastating famine. For the larger it grew, the smaller became the tribe of tall wolves, the mammoth mos-

quitoes' natural prey. Eventually the last tall wolf was gone, and only a small company of female mosquitoes was left from the once vast and powerful insect tribe. These females were forced by hunger into migration. They were ready to fall and perish from exhaustion when they reached Paul Bunyan's loggers, who, stripped to the waist, were at work even on this, the hottest of the Dry Summer's days.

Paul Bunyan was afar from his loggers at the moment, pondering deeply on the problem of calling up the clouds. He failed to notice when the ring of axes and the drone of saws were hushed. Not until agonizing yells arose from his loggers did the hero-leader realize that a new trouble had come to camp. Then he saw that his men were struggling for their lives all through the timber five miles away. Two strides and one leap, and Paul Bunyan was on the scene of battle.

Many of his loggers were already white and faint from loss of blood, and the others were hacking desperately with their axes at the dodging, diving mosquitoes. Two of the mammoth winged females were sprawled lifelessly over some pine logs. Others had paused in the fight to bind up their split bills. The battle raged on.

Paul Bunyan was so stirred with wrath at the sight that he unloosed a yell of astonishment and anger. The loggers, of course, were all lifted off their feet and then hurled to the ground by the force of that cyclonic voice; and the mammoth mosquitoes instantly took advantage of this and plunged on the loggers with bloodthirsty hums. Each one held down seven or more men at once and prepared to feast.

For a moment Paul Bunyan was in a panic. He thought of smashing the mosquitoes with smacks of his hand but that would have crushed the loggers underneath. With a mighty effort, the great logger collected his wits. He had to think fast, and he did. Paul Bunyan was that kind of man. And at once he acted.

What he did was to call for Babe the Blue Ox, whose ears were so far from his muzzle that he couldn't hear himself snort. As he approached, Babe saw what was needed for the emergency. He did not wait for orders. Without even a glance at Paul, the Blue Ox did a squads rightabout, halted, straightened out his tail, and began to flirt the mosquitoes off the prone loggers with swishes of his huge tail brush. In one minute every frustrated mosquito was humming angrily in the air and the saved loggers were galloping for the protection of the bunkhouses. There they remained. All night the ravenous mammoth mosquitoes maintained a deafening and ominous hum over the bunkhouses. Paul Bunyan listened. He figured and planned, the

ideas for sounds to call clouds forgotten for the moment. At dawn Paul Bunyan had a satisfying idea. He called for Johnny Inkslinger, his timekeeper and man of science.

"Johnny," said Paul, "you need a vacation."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Bunyan," said Johnny, but not very enthusiastically, for if there was anything he hated it was to leave his figures, his grand fountain pen and ink barrels.

"A vacation," Paul Bunyan repeated firmly. "So a vacation you shall take. A hunting vacation, Johnny. I'm going to send you bee hunting."

"Mr. Bunyan," said Johnny Inkslinger, "I am a good hunter and I like to hunt. Why, once I found a moose who had died of old age, found his moldering bones, I did, and I tracked him to his birthplace. How's that for hunting, Mr. Bunyan?" said Johnny proudly. But then he looked doubtful. "I don't know about hunting bees, though, Mr. Bunyan."

"You must not only hunt bees, Johnny. You must trap 'em and tame 'em."

"Now, Mr. Bunyan, that's asking a lot," protested Johnny Inkslinger. "I never did claim to be a bee trapper, or a bee tamer, either. Why pick on me, Mr. Bunyan?"

"Don't question orders, Johnny," said Paul Bunyan, kindly but sternly. "You pack up now for a vacation in the Mastodonic Clover country. Once there, hunt, trap, and tame the two fightingest, savagest, irritablest, cantankerousest bees you can find. Then trot 'em home to camp."

"Trot 'em, Mr. Bunyan?"

"Trot 'em, Johnny. Trot the bees."

"Yes, sir," said Johnny; and with a will, for he was sentimental about obeying orders.

When Johnny Inkslinger was sent by Paul Bunyan to do anything, he did it. So he wasn't a day in the Mastodonic Clover country until he had hunted down, trapped, and tamed — as nearly as two such fighting, savage, irritable, and cantankerous bees could be tamed — the two famous battling bees, Bum and Bill. Johnny tamed the two bees so that they allowed him to chain their wings to their bodies. They also trusted him with their stingers, which he put in his knapsack. Then Johnny Inkslinger put calked boots on the bees' hind feet, trotted them out of the clover country, trotted them on over hill and dale, trotted them all the way to camp, just as Paul Bunyan had ordered.

Paul Bunyan had a great hive ready for the two warriors. When their wings were unchained, Bum and Bill took off their calked boots, stretched their legs, ate a hearty meal of lump sugar and turned in for a refreshing sleep. The next morning they buzzed for their stingers at sunup and showed in other ways that they were eager for battle. Paul Bunyan himself led them to the woods, for Johnny Inkslinger insisted on getting back to his figures at once.

Logging had been continued under the tail of Babe the Blue Ox. For three days he had been swishing the ravenous mammoth mosquitoes away from the loggers. He was so tail-weary that he welcomed Bum and Bill, the battling bees, with a joyful moo that shivered the timber for miles. The bees answered with buzzes of rage, and it required all of Paul Bunyan's bee-taming art to convince the fighting bees that Babe was a friend and not the enemy. Bum and Bill were still buzzing suspicion when they sighted the actual foe. Then, with a battle cry that sounded like the rasping roar of a band saw, Bum and Bill lit out in a beeline and charged in an irresistible attack. In seventeen seconds the bodies of seventeen mammoth mosquitoes crashed down into the timber, shattering scores of great pines into splinters. A thunderous hum of fear sounded from the survivors. They flew off in a panic. Pursued and pursuers vanished in the haze of the Dry Summer, which smothered the forest. Soon the hums of fear and the buzzes of rage were only faint murmurs among the far trees. Paul Bunyan's teeth shone through his beard in a smile of triumph.

"Yay, Babe!" he commanded the Blue Ox.

The logging went on.

Paul Bunyan brushed his hands and praised the saints that this mosquito trouble had been so easily ended. Then he returned to his great task of trying out sounds which would call up clouds. The labor engrossed the great logger to such a degree that the mosquito invasion vanished from his thoughts. He also forgot the two big battling bees who had driven the invaders from the logging camp. But Johnny Inkslinger did not forget. Often he raised his head from his books and held his fountain pen poised in the air, while the hose lines from the ink barrels gushed an inky flood to the office floor. This Johnny Inkslinger did not notice in such moments, for he was remembering his grand success as a bee hunter, a bee trapper, and a bee tamer. It was one of the proudest memories of his life.

And often Johnny Inkslinger wondered what had become of the bees he had tamed, what had happened to the female mammoth mo--



quitoes Bum and Bill had driven from the camp. Weeks had passed, and still there was not a hum from the mosquitoes or a buzz from the bees.

Then, during such a moment of wondering and remembering, Johnny Inkslinger heard a sound from the distance that was nothing but a buzz-hum. He ran out of the office and peered into the heat haze. A small, dark cloud seemed to be moving toward the camp. Johnny watched and waited. The cloud grew larger. As it approached the loggers in the woods, Johnny saw that the cloud was a vast swarm of giant insects. They hovered over the loggers for an instant, then dived without circling. And again agonizing yells rolled up from the timber and smote Paul Bunyan's ears.

"What's happened down there?" Paul Bunyan shouted.

"The mosquitoes have come back!" said Johnny Inkslinger.

"It's a new kind, then," said Paul Bunyan, coming on the run and calling Babe the Blue Ox. "Look at 'em. They're bees!"

"They're mosquitoes," said Johnny. "Look at their bills!"

"But look at their stingers!"

"Sure enough," said Johnny Inkslinger, almost dumb with astonishment. "Why — why — Mr. Bunyan — they —"

"Look at 'em!" yelled Paul Bunyan. "Why, they got bills in front and stingers behind, and they're getting the loggers going and coming! You know what's happened? Those two bees have married the mosquitoes, that's what! And these are the offspring! Bills in front and stingers behind! Yay, Babe!"

And on Paul galloped with Babe the Blue Ox, who soon got his tail brush to working and let the loggers escape to the bunkhouses. But these mammoth insects which were half mosquito and half bee wouldn't be denied. They attacked the bunkhouses. One would stick his bill under one side of a shake on a bunkhouse roof, and his stinger under the other side; and then he would flap his wings until he had ripped off the shake; and the loggers would have to stand guard with pike poles and peavies<sup>1</sup> to keep the savage insects from coming at them through the ripped roofs. Paul Bunyan saw that he needed to act quick. So he spent another night in figuring and planning. And, just as usual, he had a grand idea at daylight. He called for Johnny Inkslinger.

"Johnny," said Paul Bunyan, "we are going to carry sugar."

"Yes, Mr. Bunyan."

"We are going to throw some rafts together, Johnny, and then we

<sup>1</sup> peavies: poles with iron points and movable iron hooks.

are going to load the rafts with all the sugar in camp. After that we are going to rope the rafts together and have Babe the Blue Ox tow the whole raft fleet out into the middle of Lake Michigan."

Johnny Inkslinger never batted an eye. He knew the great logger too well to think that any of his ideas were foolish. So Johnny went to work without a word; and by noon the rafts were built, loaded, and roped together. Paul hitched Babe to the head raft of the fleet.

"Yay, Babe," he commanded.

And the Blue Ox bowed his neck, lumbered off, and straight to the center of Lake Michigan he towed the raftloads of sugar. Johnny Inkslinger stayed on shore. He watched and waited. Soon he saw all the mosquito-bees flying out over the lake after the rafts. Then Johnny Inkslinger realized what Paul Bunyan was up to.

"Oh, ain't he got a brain, though?" said Johnny Inkslinger worshipfully. "Oh, but ain't Paul Bunyan got a brain?"

And a brain Paul Bunyan certainly had. For he had figured that the bee blood in the hybrid insects would send them after the sugar. And he had figured that their mosquito blood would make them fill their stomachs till they were stuffed. And Paul Bunyan knew the weight of sugar. . . .

Sure enough, the mosquito-bees gluttled themselves on sugar till they could hardly fly. Then Paul Bunyan started Babe on a run for the shore. The stuffed insects tried to follow. But lower and lower they flew; and soon, with anguished buzz-hums, they all sank into the waters of the great lake; and that was the last of them.

The camp of Paul Bunyan was never again troubled by mammoth mosquitoes, or by mammoth mosquito-bees, either. Bum and Bill at last returned to camp, and gave every appearance of being ashamed of themselves. Paul Bunyan did not reproach them, but gave them a home in a furnished hive; and thereafter Bum and Bill occupied themselves solely with making honey for the loggers' flapjacks. Their fighting days were done.

History does not state the fate of the female mammoth mosquitoes. Some authorities advance the idea that they flew to Asia. They point to the elephant to prove their contention. The elephant, they assert, is descended from the mammoth mosquito of Paul Bunyan's time. Other authorities ridicule this idea, asserting that the elephant is too small to be a descendant of the mammoth mosquito.

All such ideas and contentions are guesswork, however. And guesswork has no place in the history of Paul Bunyan.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1 Can you understand why life on the frontier made "tall tales" especially popular there? What other folk heroes live in "tall tales" of their exploits?

2 What conditions particularly characteristic of the lumbering regions are reflected in this Paul Bunyan story?

*For Ambitious Students*

3 Margaret Prescott Montague has recorded the Tony Beaver legends of the Appalachian country in a book called *Up Eel River*. One of the stories, "The World's Funny Bone," has Paul Bunyan for a character. Read the story and see if her Paul Bunyan runs true to form.

4 Read other famous stories of exaggeration, such as the Baron Munchausen stories and Mark Twain's "The Jumping Frog," and compare them with the Paul Bunyan yarns.

5 Tall tales are as much fun to make up as to read. Pick out a favorite type of character in your part of the country, a modern or an old-time, and write up a tall tale about him. Remember that convincing little details are the life of such a story. Stage in class a "bunkhouse service" in which each tells his story, supposedly around a fire.

*2. The Rise of Industry*

During the last years of the nineteenth century and the first years of the twentieth the dominating feature of American life was the rise of industry. Fast on the heels of the closing frontier came the machine. Hardly had the sound of the pounding feet of the Pony Express died away before there arose the ring of mallets on the new railway line to link the Atlantic and the Pacific. Factories, formerly clustered east of the Alleghenies, spread rapidly west to come nearer the new markets opened up by the railroads and the wealth of raw materials. With them came cities, for factory workers must live near their work, and many men work in one factory. All across the continent the new cities sprang up like mushrooms—Cincinnati, Chicago, Kansas City, Denver, Salt Lake City, and Los Angeles. More and more homes were moved from the open air and sunshine of the prairie and the small town into the dingy shadows of the tall smokestacks, into the huddle of city slums. Not just Americans from the farm and town rushed into the cities. Foreign labor rushed in, too, and nearly every city in the broad land developed foreign quarters.

— Italian quarters, Polish quarters, Chinatowns. Crowded together, often hundreds to the city block, these foreigners were thrown closely into their own society and were absorbed into America only slowly, creating an added problem in all the major cities. The old American spirit responded to a new problem with a new plan. Soon there arose in the heart of the slums and foreign quarters settlement houses such as Jane Addams's Hull House in Chicago, offering the newcomers to America opportunity for healthful recreation, for education, for Americanization.

**A conflict of ideals.** The great industrial boom brought with it the greatest challenge the American Spirit has had to meet, for it was not exempt from the pains that usually accompany growth. Two cherished American ideals were soon discovered to be in conflict. Americans believed with all their hearts in free enterprise, in an open field and a clear opportunity for energy and shrewdness to forge ahead. But they believed with equal fervor that all Americans deserved a share in American prosperity. They were hurt and shocked to find that their beloved freedom could mean freedom for one man to squeeze the public, to deny to his fellow countrymen their share in prosperity. But the old courage and energy soon attacked the new problem and set to work to design a compromise that would preserve the best features of free enterprise and still protect the interests of the people. The whole period from 1860 to 1914 is an infinitely multiplied drama of business growing strong, growing greedy, awakening public indignation, and being checked and governed by laws intended to protect the public welfare.

One of the business practices that soon aroused public wrath was the formation of huge monopolies in some industries, so large and so powerful that they could set prices at their own pleasure and leave the people no choice except to pay exorbitant prices or do without what they needed. This unhappy situation soon provoked the first of the antitrust laws, a blow to free enterprise but a help to the buying public. Another source of long conflict was railroad rates. The trans-continental lines had been welcomed with boundless enthusiasm by the Western farmers, who foresaw prosperity and plenty when their crops could be transported to Eastern markets. But lack of competition and the desire to make a profit in proportion to their huge investments moved the railroads to set freight rates so high that the railroad sometimes made more money on a crop than the farmer who raised it. A great wailing arose, all the bitterer because the disappointment had followed such high hopes. The building of more rail-

roads, bringing competition for the traffic, afforded some relief, but the feud between railroad and shipper remained a sore one until 1910 when the Interstate Commerce Commission was given the power to regulate rate making. Such struggles as those over the trusts and the freight rates were going on all through the long period between 1860 and 1914, with the outcome always the same — more government restriction of business in order to let all America share in the benefits of national growth and development.

**Business and government.** America had other shocks and storms to weather besides the disillusionment about free enterprise in business. One of the most severe was learning that democracy was not a divinely inspired way of living but a human institution that needed constant tending. When the government had under its control much of the new wealth of the West, men set to work to influence the distribution for their own profit. Congressmen who voted enormous grants of land to the railroad companies were found to have been rewarded with gifts of stocks or bonds. Many another political finger was caught fishing for plums in the rich pies being cut in the seventies and eighties. There were scandals about graft in high governmental places. Nor was graft limited to Washington. States and cities were organized under political bosses who controlled the granting of profitable local franchises and monopolies. After a series of exposés in newspapers and magazines — the now famous muckraking campaigns — reform slowly began to make headway against corruption. The old story was relived. Americans set up a splendid ideal and left it to care for itself; its flaws appeared to shock and distress the nation; then the old courage and energy tackled the new task, slow and unexciting though it might be.

The influence of business on governmental action was most clearly demonstrated in the Spanish-American War in 1898. Americans had some fifty million dollars invested in Cuba, largely in sugar plantations. Spain seemed to be unable to keep such order on the island as was necessary for the protection of American property. "Peace and independence for Cuba" became an avowed aim of the Republican party in the presidential campaign of 1896, and the Republicans won. The press found splendid human-interest material in the oppression of the Cubans, right at the doorstep of America, by a European power, and rousing stories filled the press. America the champion of liberty for weak nations worked hand in hand with America the holder of valuable properties in Cuba. The result in Cuba — a transfer from the Spanish flag to the American — was easy to foresee.

1850 1861 1865 1900 1940

War between the States

1859  
Gold discovered in Colorado

1861  
The Pony Express

1866  
Trans-Atlantic Cable

1867  
Alaska purchased from Russia

1869  
East and West Railroad joined at Ogden, Utah

1876  
Custer's Indian Wars

1889  
The Dakotas and Washington admitted as States

1890  
Frontier officially declared closed

1896  
Klondike Gold rush

1898  
Spanish-American War

1903  
Wright Brothers fly

1910  
New Mexico last state admitted to Union

1914 1918  
World War

1850 1884 1904 1936

Lafcadio Hearn

1884  
*The Roar of a Great City*

1867 1898 1910 1902 1901 1931 1927 1912 1892

Finley Peter Dunne

*Mr. Dooley Series*

1870 Frank Norris

1871 Thomas A. Daly

1876 Ole E. Rolvaag

1881 Mary Antin

*The Promised Land*

James Stevens

With the seizure of Manila during the Spanish war, interest in a Pacific base for commerce became keen; and the addition of the Philippines to the American "empire" was a source of pride for most of the nation. Others, however, felt bitter shame that their country should hold the people of another in subjection, and cried aloud against the forfeit of honor for commercial advancement. But business interests rode high; and the islands were destined to remain under the American flag until such time as their own products should come into uncomfortable competition with those of the States, and injured business should again join the outcry of the idealists.

**Influence on the American Spirit.** The profound changes in American life that accompanied the rise of industry resulted, as we have seen, in maladjustment and discontent. The boundless optimism of those who found a quick way to wealth in the exploitation of Western resources or in new manufacturing enterprises was balanced by the discouragement and gloom of those who suffered from new inequalities. Idealists were embittered by the damage treasured American faiths suffered in the scramble for money. Even the captains of industry were dismayed by the financial panics that recurred from time to time as the unsound soaring of prices and values collapsed. The American Spirit had learned to overcome physical difficulties — timberland and tough prairie sod to be broken for farms, a continent to be spanned by steel. Now it encountered intangible obstacles to happiness — social and economic problems that had to be solved, not by physical strength, not by courage alone, but by hard, clear thinking guided by a sense of justice and fairness. The task was harder than winning and clearing the continent. None of the glamour and romantic thrill that had accompanied earlier American adventures cheered the new crusaders, but they kept on. The best minds became more and more concerned with working out a happy way of life for all the nation. Inevitably literature reflected the new seriousness, and realism replaced the old romantic attitudes. So important was the rise of realism in America that it needs separate discussion. You will find its course traced in the next chapter, devoted entirely to that one subject.

#### SUMMARY

The period between 1860 and 1914 encompassed many great changes in American life, changes created by the filling up of the free lands in the West and the rapid rise of industry. The late frontier

and the early industrial development existed side by side. The West saw the development of varied ways of living — the cowboy's, the prairie farmer's, the miner's, and the lumberjack's, all leaving folk literature, but little artistic literature except in the work of Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and Eugene Field. The rise of industry stimulated the growth of large cities and more immigration. It also produced social and economic maladjustments that severely tested the strength of American ideals. The conflict of the public interest with business monopoly and the conflict of farmers with railroads over freight rates were typical of the period. The influence of business on government was shown most clearly in the scandals over graft and municipal corruption in the muckraking era, and in the growth of imperialistic policy with the Spanish-American War. The American Spirit, after a period of gloom, entered upon the solution of the country's problems with an increasing seriousness which was reflected in a strong literary movement toward realism.

## THE ROAR OF A GREAT CITY

by LAFCADIO HEARN (1850-1904)

With the rapid growth of cities in the late nineteenth century came rapid growth of newspapers. Here we have a newspaper sketch of the sounds of a great city written in the days when the roar was still a comparatively new sensation. It appeared in the New Orleans *Times-Democrat* for November 20, 1884, from the pen of one of the erratic geniuses of American journalism. Lafcadio Hearn was born of an Irish father and a Greek mother on an island in the Ionian Sea, was educated by a strict Victorian aunt in England, and came to America when he was nineteen. In between difficult times at odd jobs, he wrote for the Cincinnati *Enquirer* and the New Orleans *Times-Democrat*. But he was not at home in America. He went to the West Indies, where he was happier, and finally to Japan, where he became a naturalized Japanese and married a Japanese woman. He wrote many books about his adopted country — sensitive, understanding books — but his work was not popular in this country until after his death. Only in 1924 were many of his articles for American newspapers culled from the old files and published in a book. So it is not just a report on a new phenomenon that we find in this little article, but also the report of a passer-by to whom the whole scene remained a little strange and foreign.



WHEN Hogarth<sup>1</sup> painted his story of "The Enraged Musician," whose music was drowned in the thousand cries and noises that surrounded him; when Chambers<sup>2</sup> describes "The Roar of a Great City," the blending of a thousand noises, it was of the city of the past they told. Since then this roar has been growing louder and louder, until now, miles away, even before you see the smoky coronet that surrounds the modern city, you can hear a wild growl like that of some enraged beast. Neither Hogarth nor Chambers dreamed of the fierce whistle of the steamboat and locomotive, of the rattle of engine and machinery, of the cannonade as a cotton float flies over the granite pavement, of the stunning noise of the New York Elevated Railroad. All these have come of late years.

The electric light, the telephone and telegraph wires have added new music to our city. When the winds blow at night one can hear a somber, melancholy music high up in the air — as mysterious as that of Ariel<sup>3</sup> himself or the undiscovered music of the Pascagoula. If you want to hear it in perfection go some of these windy nights we have lately enjoyed to Delord or Dryades, or some of the streets in the neighborhood of the electric-light works, where the wires are numerous and the houses low, and where there is a clean sweep for the wind from the New Basin to the river. There the music becomes wild and grand indeed. The storm whistling and shrieking around some sharp corner never equaled it. Above, around, in every direction can be heard this music, sighing, mourning like the treetops, with a buzzing metallic sound that almost drowns your conversation. There is something in it weird and melancholy — it is like the last wail of a dying man, or the shriek of the angel of death as he clasps his victim to him.

If such it is today, what have we to hope for in the future? If the city is already a monstrous spiderweb, a great Aeolian harp, what is its destiny with several new telephone and telegraph companies, and thousands of new poles, and millions of new wires promised us? If this aerial music increases, this shrieking and moaning and wailing will reach such a pitch that we will greet the rattle of the floats and tinkle of the streetcars as tending to drown the new noise, and welcome the roar of the city as likely to muffle its meaning.

<sup>1</sup> Hogarth: English painter and engraver famous for his caricatures of eighteenth-century London life. <sup>2</sup> Chambers: probably one of the two Chambers brothers, William and Robert, Scottish authors and publishers of the early nineteenth century. William wrote a book about his visit to America in 1853. <sup>3</sup> Ariel; a supernatural being in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, who guided or taunted others by his mysterious songs.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How many of the sounds Hearn describes are related to the advance of industry? Does he seem to like the city? Find evidence that he does, and that he doesn't.
2. From this short article can you form any idea of the author's literary style? How well do you think it would fit into American journalism? into Japanese culture? Can you understand why his style has been widely admired?
3. How do the sounds of Hearn's city compare with the sounds of a modern city? List new noises the modern city has developed, and see if any on his list have been eliminated. Do you think there has been any improvement?

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE PROMISED  
LAND

by MARY ANTIN (1881- )

America might be having trouble with its growing pains during the 1890's, but it was still the promised land to many a European immigrant who could find few opportunities open for him at home. What was America like to these eager newcomers? We can turn to Mary Antin's autobiographical book, *The Promised Land* (1912), and rediscover our own country with a little immigrant girl who was just thirteen when she came to Boston from Russia. In explaining why she was writing her autobiography when she was not yet thirty, Miss Antin said, "I am only one of the many whose fate it has been to live a page of modern history. We are the strands of the cable that binds the Old World to the New. As the ships that brought us link the shores of Europe and America, so our lives span the bitter sea of racial differences and misunderstandings. Before we came, the New World knew not the Old; but since we have begun to come, the Young World has taken the Old by the hand, and the two are learning to march side by side, seeking a common destiny." The eager little girl whom we find in the following chapter from *The Promised Land* successfully adapted her ways to those of the new country, finished the public schools of Boston, and later attended Columbia University. When she was twenty she married a professor on the faculty at Columbia.

And now for a look at the tenement section of Boston through the eyes of one to whom it was "The Promised Land."

BY THE TIME we joined my father,<sup>1</sup> he had surveyed many avenues of approach toward the coveted citadel of fortune. One of these, heretofore untried, he now proposed to essay, armed with new courage and cheered on by the presence of his family. In partnership with an energetic little man who had an English chapter in his history, he prepared to set up a refreshment booth on Crescent Beach. But while he was completing arrangements at the beach we remained in town, where we enjoyed the educational advantages of a thickly populated neighborhood; namely, Wall Street, in the West End of Boston.

Anybody who knows Boston knows that the West and North Ends comprise the chief tenement districts of Boston, where people who have never lived in the tenements are fond of going sight-seeing. He may know all this and yet not guess how Wall Street, in the West End, appears in the eyes of a little immigrant from Polotzk. What would the sophisticated sight-seer say about Union Place, off Wall Street, where my new home waited for me? He would say that it is no place at all, but a short box of an alley. Two rows of three-story tenements are its sides, a stingy strip of sky is its lid, a littered pavement is the floor, and a narrow mouth its exit.

But I saw a very different picture on my introduction to Union Place. I saw two imposing rows of brick buildings, loftier than any dwelling I had ever lived in. Brick was even on the ground for me to tread on, instead of common earth or boards. Many friendly windows stood open, filled with uncovered heads of women and children. I thought the people were interested in us, which was very neighborly. I looked up to the topmost row of windows, and my eyes were filled with the May blue of an American sky!

In our days of affluence in Russia we had been accustomed to upholstered parlors, embroidered linen, silver spoons and candlesticks, goblets of gold, kitchen shelves shining with copper and brass. We had feather beds heaped halfway to the ceiling; we had clothespresses dusky with velvet and silk and fine woolen. The three small rooms into which my father now ushered us, up one flight of stairs, contained only the necessary beds, with lean mattresses; a few wooden chairs: a table or two; a mysterious iron structure, which later turned out to be a stove; a couple of unornamental kerosene lamps; and a scanty array of cooking utensils and crockery. And yet we were all impressed with our new home and its furniture. It was not only because we had just passed through our seven lean years, cooking in earthen

<sup>1</sup> joined my father: He had been in America for three years before his family came.

vessels, eating black bread on holidays, and wearing cotton; it was chiefly because these wooden chairs and tin pans were American chairs and pans that they shone glorious in our eyes. And if there was anything lacking for comfort or decoration we expected it to be presently supplied — at least, we children did. Perhaps my mother alone, of us newcomers, appreciated the shabbiness of the little apartment and realized that for her there was as yet no laying down of the burden of poverty.

Our initiation into American ways began with the first step on the new soil. My father found occasion to instruct or correct us even on the way from the pier to Wall Street, which journey we made crowded together in a rickety cab. He told us not to lean out of the windows, not to point, and explained the word "greenhorn." We did not want to be "greenhorns," and gave the strictest attention to my father's instructions. I do not know when my parents found opportunity to review together the history of Polotzk in the three years past, for we children had no patience with the subject; my mother's narrative was constantly interrupted by irrelevant questions, interjections, and explanations.

The first meal was an object lesson of much variety. My father produced several kinds of food, ready to eat, without any cooking, from little tin cans that had printing all over them. He attempted to introduce us to a queer, slippery kind of fruit, which he called "banana," but had to give it up for the time being. After the meal he had better luck with a curious piece of furniture on runners, which he called "rocking chair." There were five of us newcomers, and we found five different ways of getting into the American machine of perpetual motion, and as many ways of getting out of it. One born and bred to the use of a rocking chair cannot imagine how ludicrous people can make themselves when attempting to use it for the first time. We laughed immoderately over our various experiments with the novelty, which was a wholesome way of letting off steam after the unusual excitement of the day.

In our flat we did not think of such a thing as storing the coal in the bathtub. There was no bathtub. So in the evening of the first day my father conducted us to the public baths. As we moved along in a little procession, I was delighted with the illumination of the streets. So many lamps, and they burned until morning, my father said, and so people did not need to carry lanterns. In America, then, everything was free, as we had heard in Russia. Light was free; the streets were as bright as a synagogue on a holy day. Music was free;

we had been serenaded, to our gaping delight, by a brass band of many pieces, soon after our installation on Union Place.

Education was free. That subject my father had written about repeatedly, as comprising his chief hope for us children, the essence of American opportunity, the treasure that no thief could touch, not even misfortune or poverty. It was the one thing that he was able to promise us when he sent for us; surer, safer than bread or shelter. On our second day I was thrilled with the realization of what this freedom of education meant. A little girl from across the alley came and offered to conduct us to school. My father was out, but we five between us had a few words of English by this time. We knew the word school. We understood. This child, who had never seen us till yesterday, who could not pronounce our names, who was not much better dressed than we, was able to offer us the freedom of the schools of Boston! No application made; no questions asked; no examinations, rulings, exclusions; no machinations; no fees. The doors stood open for every one of us. The smallest child could show us the way.

This incident impressed me more than anything I had heard in advance of the freedom of education in America. It was a concrete proof — almost the thing itself. One had to experience it to understand it.

It was a great disappointment to be told by my father that we were not to enter upon our school career at once. It was too near the end of the term, he said, and we were going to move to Crescent Beach in a week or so. We had to wait until the opening of the schools in September. What a loss of precious time — from May till September!

Not that the time was really lost. Even the interval on Union Place was crowded with lessons and experiences. We had to visit the stores and be dressed from head to foot in American clothing; we had to learn the mysteries of the iron stove, the washboard, and the speaking tube; we had to learn to trade with the fruit peddler through the window, and not to be afraid of the policeman; and, above all, we had to learn English.

The kind people who assisted us in these important matters form a group by themselves in the gallery of my friends. If I had never seen them from those early days till now, I should still have remembered them with gratitude. When I enumerate the long list of my American teachers, I must begin with those who came to us on Wall Street and taught us our first steps. To my mother, in her perplexity over the cookstove, the woman who showed her how to make the fire was an angel of deliverance. A fairy godmother to us children was

she who led us to a wonderful country called "uptown," where, in a dazzlingly beautiful palace called a "department store," we exchanged our hateful homemade European costumes, which pointed us out as "greenhorns" to the children on the street, for real American machine-made garments, and issued forth glorified in each other's eyes.

With our despised immigrant clothing we shed also our impossible Hebrew names. A committee of our friends, several years ahead of us in American experience, put their heads together and concocted American names for us all. Those of our real names that had no pleasing American equivalents they ruthlessly discarded, content if they retained the initials. My mother, possessing a name that was not easily translatable, was punished with the undignified nickname of Annie. Fetchke, Joseph, and Deborah issued as Frieda, Joseph, and Dora, respectively. As for poor me, I was simply cheated. The name they gave me was hardly new. My Hebrew name being Maryashe in full, Mashke for short, Russianized into Marya (*Mar-ya*), my friends said that it would hold good in English as *Mary*; which was very disappointing, as I longed to possess a strange-sounding American name like the others.

I am forgetting the consolation I had, in this matter of names, from the use of my surname, which I have had no occasion to mention until now. I found on my arrival that my father was "Mr. Antin" on the slightest provocation, and not, as in Polotzk, on state occasions alone. And so I was "Mary Antin," and I felt very important to answer to such a dignified title. It was just like America that even plain people should wear their surnames on weekdays.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What features of the new environment that were commonplace to Americans seemed wonderful to the newcomers? What evidence can you find that things seemed wonderful not because they were unusually splendid but just because they were American?
2. How did the immigrant family show their great desire to fit into the life of America? Do you think you could possibly be happy to make such great changes in your own ways if you went to another country to live?
3. Did you find yourself hoping that everyone would be kind to Mary and her family? Do you ever have opportunities to show similar kindness to other newcomers to America? or do you just laugh at them?
4. Do you believe that immigrants with such an attitude toward their

new country as the Antins had will make just as good citizens as native-born Americans? What can we learn from them that will make us better citizens ourselves?

### *For Ambitious Students*

5. Make a list of "Immigrants Who Have Made Good." Include their nationality, their age when entering America, and their notable achievements. Discuss the value of what you have discovered in making this list

## TWO 'MERICANA MEN

by THOMAS AUGUSTINE DALY (1871- )

In the foreign quarters of the larger American cities one can always hear English spoken with a variety of accents — accents often the source of amusement to native Americans. But the amusement is usually kindly, as in the poems of Thomas Augustine Daly. A man with an Irish name would hardly be expected to make his reputation with poems in Italian dialect, but that is what Daly has done. He is a native of Philadelphia and has been connected with several newspapers of his city, especially the *Evening Ledger*. His natural gift for reproducing the dialects of the many nationalities among the immigrant population of a great city proved valuable in verses for his newspaper columns. He tried various types of speech; but the Italian seemed his special forte, and the names of his volumes *Canzoni* and *Carmina* suggest the flavor of the poems within. He has published a number of other volumes, some containing poems in "pure" English. In recognition of his work he has been given an honorary degree of Doctor of Literature by Fordham University, which he had attended for two years before going into newspaper work. His poems are sometimes delightfully gay and lighthearted, at other times poignant with hidden tears. The following suggests the sentiment running through most of them — that human understanding makes all nations kin.

Beeg Irish cop dat walks hees beat  
 By dees peanutta stan',  
 First two, t'ree week w'en we are meet  
 Ees call me "Dagoman."  
 An' w'en he see how mad I gat,  
 Wheech eesa pleass heem, too,

Wan day he say: "W'at's matter dat,  
 Ain't 'Dago' name for you?  
 Dat's 'Mericana name, you know,  
 For man from Eetaly;  
 Eet ees no harm for call you so,  
 Den why be mad weeth me? "

10

First time he talka deesa way  
 I am too mad for speak,  
 But nexta time I justa say:  
 " All righta, Meester Meeck! "

15

O! my, I nevva hear bayfore  
 Sooch langwadge like he say;  
 An' he don't look at me no more  
 For mebbe two, t'ree day.

20

But pretta soon agen I see  
 Das beeg poleecaman  
 Dat com' an' growl an' say to me:  
 " Hallo, Eyetalian!

Now, mebbe so you gon' deny  
 Dat dat's a name for you."

25

I smila back, an' mak' reply:  
 " No, Irish, dat's a true."  
 " Ha! Joe," he cry, " you theenk dat we  
 Should call you 'Merican? "  
 " Dat's gooda 'nough," I say, " for me,  
 Eef dat's w'at you are, Dan."

30

So now all times we speaka so  
 Like gooda 'Merican:  
 He say to me, " Good morna, Joe,"  
 I say, " Good morna, Dan."

35

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What does this little poem have in common with Mary Antin's narrative of her first months in Boston? Do you think Daly must have talked much with the immigrants in his own city? Why?

2. Try reading the poem aloud. Daly's spelling of the dialect is remarkably clear and effective, and the dialect adds music and rhythm to the poem.



*For Ambitious Students*

3. If you read the chapter successfully, present either of Daly's popular Italian-English poems before the class.

**ALL THE TRAFFIC WILL BEAR***from THE OCTOPUS***by FRANK NORRIS (1870-1902)**

The early struggles of the Western farmers with railroad freight rates that often took all the profit out of their farming form the central theme of *The Octopus* (1901), the first book in a series of three Frank Norris proposed to write about wheat and the part it plays in men's lives. See page 1149 for a fuller account of Norris. It is not the long story of the strife between the wheat farmers and the railroads that gives us the clearest picture of the ruin a rise in rates could bring to a farmer, but the little episode of a man who thought he could escape the general fate by raising another crop. S. Behrman all through the book personifies the cold, impersonal greed of the railroads that fattened off the struggling farmers.

THE ex-engineer<sup>1</sup> reached the post office in Bonnevillie toward eleven o'clock; but he did not at once present his notice of the arrival of his consignment at Ruggles's office. It entertained him to indulge in an hour's lounging about the streets. It was seldom he got into town, and when he did he permitted himself the luxury of enjoying his evident popularity. He met friends everywhere, in the post office, in the drugstore, in the barbershop, and around the courthouse. With each one he held a moment's conversation; almost invariably this ended in the same way:

"Come on 'n have a drink."

"Well, I don't care if I do."

And the friends proceeded to the Yosemite bar, pledging each other with punctilious ceremony. Dyke, however, was a strictly temperate man. His life on the engine had trained him well. Alcohol he never touched, drinking instead ginger ale, sarsaparilla and iron — soft drinks.

At the drugstore, which also kept a stock of miscellaneous stationery, his eye was caught by a "transparent slate," a child's toy.

<sup>1</sup> ex-engineer: Dyke, who had formerly worked for the railroad

where upon a little pane of frosted glass one could trace with considerable elaboration outline figures of cows, plows, bunches of fruit, and even rural watermills that were printed on slips of paper underneath.

"Now, there's an idea, Jim," he observed to the boy behind the soda-water fountain; "I know a little tad that would just about jump out of her skin for that. Think I'll have to take it with me."

"How's Sidney getting along?" the other asked, while wrapping up the package.

Dyke's enthusiasm had made of his little girl a celebrity throughout Bonnevile.

The ex-engineer promptly became voluble, assertive, doggedly emphatic.

"Smartest little tad in all Tulare County, and more fun! A regular whole show in herself."

"And the hops?" inquired the other.

"Bully," declared Dyke, with the good-natured man's readiness to talk of his private affairs to anyone who would listen. "Bully. I'm dead sure of a bonanza crop by now. The rain came *just* right. I actually don't know as I can store the crop in those barns I built, it's going to be so big. That foreman of mine was a daisy. Jim, I'm going to make money in that deal. After I've paid off the mortgage — you know I had to mortgage, yes, crop and homestead both, but I can pay it off and all the interest to boot, lovely — well, and as I was saying, after all expenses are paid off I'll clear big money, m' son. Yes, sir. I *knew* there was boodle in hops. You know the crop is contracted for already. Sure, the foreman managed that. He's a daisy. Chap in San Francisco will take it all and at the advanced price. I wanted to hang on, to see if it wouldn't go to six cents, but the foreman said, 'No, that's good enough.' So I signed. Ain't it bully, hey?"

"Then what'll you do?"

"Well, I don't know. I'll have a layoff for a month or so and take the little tad and Mother up and show 'em the city — 'Frisco — until it's time for the schools to open, and then we'll put Sid in the seminary at Marysville. Catch on?"

"I suppose you'll stay right by hops now?"

"Right you are, m' son. I know a good thing when I see it. There's plenty others going into hops next season. I set 'em the example. Wouldn't be surprised if it came to be a regular industry hereabouts. I'm planning ahead for next year already. I can let the foreman go,

now that I've learned the game myself, and I think I'll buy a piece of land off Quien Sabe and get a bigger crop, and build a couple more barns, and, by George, in about five years' time I'll have things humming. I'm going to make *money*, Jim."

He emerged once more into the street and went up the block leisurely, planting his feet squarely. He fancied that he could feel he was considered of more importance nowadays. He was no longer a subordinate, an employee. He was his own man, a proprietor, an owner of land, furthering a successful enterprise. No one had helped him; he had followed no one's lead. He had struck out unaided for himself, and his success was due solely to his own intelligence, industry, and foresight. He squared his great shoulders till the blue gingham of his jumper all but cracked. Of late, his great blond beard had grown and the work in the sun had made his face very red. Under the visor of his cap — relic of his engineering days — his blue eyes twinkled with vast good nature. He felt that he made a fine figure as he went by a group of young girls in lawns and muslins and garden hats on their way to the post office. He wondered if they looked after him, wondered if they had heard that he was in a fair way to become a rich man.

But the chronometer in the window of the jewelry store warned him that time was passing. He turned about and, crossing the street, took his way to Ruggles's office, which was the freight as well as the land office of the P. and S. W. Railroad.

As he stood for a moment at the counter in front of the wire partition, waiting for the clerk to make out the order for the freight agent at the depot, Dyke was surprised to see a familiar figure in conference with Ruggles himself, by a desk inside the railing.

The figure was that of a middle-aged man, fat, with a great stomach, which he stroked from time to time. As he turned about, addressing a remark to the clerk, Dyke recognized S. Behrman. The banker, railroad agent, and political manipulator seemed to the ex-engineer's eyes to be more gross than ever. His smooth-shaven jowl stood out big and tremulous on either side of his face; the roll of fat on the nape of his neck, sprinkled with sparse, stiff hairs, bulged out with great prominence. His great stomach, covered with a light brown linen vest, stamped with innumerable interlocked horseshoes, protruded far in advance, enormous, aggressive. He wore his inevitable round-topped hat of stiff brown straw, varnished so bright that it reflected the light of the office windows like a helmet; and even from where he stood Dyke could hear his loud breathing and the clink of

the hollow links of his watch chain upon the vest buttons of imitation pearl, as his stomach rose and fell.

Dyke looked at him with attention. There was the enemy, the representative of the Trust with which Derrick's League was locking horns. The great struggle had begun to invest the combatants with interest. Daily, almost hourly, Dyke was in touch with the ranchers, the wheat growers. He heard their denunciations, their growls of exasperation and defiance. Here was the other side — this placid fat man, with a stiff straw hat and linen vest, who never lost his temper, who smiled affably upon his enemies, giving them good advice, commiserating with them in one defeat after another, never ruffled, never excited, sure of his power, conscious that back of him was the Machine, the colossal force, the inexhaustible coffers of a mighty organization, vomiting millions to the League's thousands.

The League was clamorous, ubiquitous, its objects known to every urchin on the streets; but the Trust was silent, its ways inscrutable — the public saw only results. It worked on in the dark, calm, disciplined, irresistible. Abruptly Dyke received the impression of the multitudinous ramifications of the colossus. Under his feet the ground seemed mined; down there below him in the dark the huge tentacles went silently twisting and advancing, spreading out in every direction, sapping the strength of all opposition, quiet, gradual, bidding the time to reach up and out and grip with a sudden unleashing of gigantic strength.

"I'll be wanting some cars of you people before the summer is out," observed Dyke to the clerk as he folded up and put away the order that the other had handed him. He remembered perfectly well that he had arranged the matter of transporting his crop some months before, but his role of proprietor amused him and he liked to busy himself again and again with the details of his undertaking.

"I suppose," he added, "you'll be able to give 'em to me. There'll be a big wheat crop to move this year, and I don't want to be caught in any car famine."

"Oh, you'll get your cars," murmured the other.

"I'll be the means of bringing business your way," Dyke went on; "I've done so well with my hops that there are a lot of others going into the business next season. Suppose," he continued, struck with an idea, "suppose we went into some sort of pool, a sort of shippers' organization, could you give us special rates, cheaper rates — say a cent and a half? "

The other looked up.

"A cent and a half! Say *four* cents and a half and maybe I'll talk business with you."

"Four cents and a half," returned Dyke; "I don't see it. Why, the regular rate is only two cents."

"No, it isn't," answered the clerk, looking him gravely in the eye. "it's five cents."

"Well, there's where you are wrong, m' son," Dyke retorted genially. "You look it up. You'll find the freight on hops from Bonneville to 'Frisco is two cents a pound for carload lots. You told me that yourself last fall."

"That was last fall," observed the clerk. There was a silence. Dyke shot a glance of suspicion at the other. Then, reassured, he remarked, "You look it up. You'll see I'm right."

S. Behrman came forward and shook hands politely with the engineer.

"Anything I can do for you, Mr. Dyke?"

Dyke explained. When he had done speaking, the clerk turned to S. Behrman and observed respectfully:

"Our regular rate on hops is five cents."

"Yes," answered S. Behrman, pausing to reflect; "yes, Mr. Dyke, that's right — five cents."

The clerk brought forward a folder of yellow paper and handed it to Dyke. It was inscribed at the top "Tariff Schedule No. 8," and underneath these words, in brackets, was a smaller inscription: "*Supersedes No. 7 of Aug. 1.*"

"See for yourself," said S. Behrman. He indicated an item under the head of "Miscellany."

"The following rates for carriage of hops in carload lots," read Dyke, "take effect June 1, and will remain in force until superseded by a later tariff. Those quoted beyond Stockton are subject to changes in traffic arrangements with carriers by water from that point."

In the list that was printed below, Dyke saw that the rate for hops between Bonneville or Guadalajara and San Francisco was five cents.

For a moment Dyke was confused. Then swiftly the matter became clear in his mind. The railroad had raised the freight on hops from two cents to five.

All his calculations as to a profit on his little investment he had based on a freight rate of two cents a pound. He was under contract to deliver his crop. He could not draw back. The new rate ate up every cent of his gains. He stood there ruined.

"Why, what do you mean?" he burst out. "You promised me a rate of two cents and I went ahead with my business with that understanding. What do you mean?"

S. Behrman and the clerk watched him from the other side of the counter.

"The rate is five cents," declared the clerk doggedly.

"Well, that ruins me!" shouted Dyke. "Do you understand? I won't make fifty cents. *Make!* Why, I will *owe* — I'll be — be — That ruins me, do you understand?"

The other raised a shoulder.

"We don't force you to ship. You can do as you like. The rate is five cents."

"Well — but — damn you, I'm under contract to deliver. What am I going to do? Why, you told me — you promised me a two-cent rate."

"I don't remember it," said the clerk. "I don't know anything about that. But I know this: I know that hops have gone up. I know the German crop was a failure and that the crop in New York wasn't worth the hauling. Hops have gone up to nearly a dollar. You don't suppose we don't know that, do you, Mr. Dyke?"

"What's the price of hops got to do with you?"

"It's got *this* to do with us," returned the other with a sudden aggressiveness, "that the freight rate has gone up to meet the price. We're not doing business for our health. My orders are to raise your rate to five cents, and I think you are getting off easy."

Dyke stared in blank astonishment. For the moment the audacity of the affair was what most appealed to him. He forgot its personal application.

"Great Scott," he murmured, "Great Scott! What will you people do next? Look here. What's your basis of applying freight rates, anyhow?" he suddenly vociferated with furious sarcasm. "What's your rule? What are you guided by?"

But at the words S. Behrman, who had kept silent during the heat of the discussion, leaned abruptly forward. For the only time in his knowledge, Dyke saw his face inflamed with anger and with the enmity and contempt of all this farming element with whom he was contending.

"Yes, what's your rule? What's your basis?" demanded Dyke, turning swiftly to him.

S. Behrman emphasized each word of his reply with a tap of one forefinger on the counter before him:

"All — the traffic — will — bear."

The ex-engineer stepped back a pace, his fingers on the ledge of the counter, to steady himself. He felt himself grow pale; his heart became a mere leaden weight in his chest, inert, refusing to beat.

In a second the whole affair, in all its bearings, went speeding before the eye of his imagination like the rapid unrolling of a panorama. Every cent of his earnings was sunk in this hop business of his. More than that, he had borrowed money to carry it on, certain of success — borrowed of S. Behrman, offering his crop and his little home as security. Once he failed to meet his obligations, S. Behrman would foreclose. Not only would the railroad devour every morsel of his profits, but also it would take from him his home; at a blow he would be left penniless and without a home. What would then become of his mother — and what would become of the little tad? She, whom he had been planning to educate like a veritable lady. For all that year he had talked of his ambition for his little daughter to everyone he met. All Bonneville knew of it. What a mark for gibes he had made of himself. The workingman turned farmer! What a target for jeers — he who had fancied he could elude the railroad! He remembered he had once said the great trust had overlooked his little enterprise, disdaining to plunder such small fry. He should have known better than that. How had he ever imagined the road would permit him to make any money?

Anger was not in him yet; no rousing of the blind, white-hot wrath that leaps to the attack with prehensile fingers moved him. The blow merely crushed, staggered, confused.

He stepped aside to give place to a coatless man in a pink shirt, who entered, carrying in his hands an automatic door-closing apparatus.

"Where does this go?" inquired the man.

Dyke sat down for a moment on a seat that had been removed from a worn-out railway car to do duty in Ruggles's office. On the back of a yellow envelope he made some vague figures with a stump of blue pencil, multiplying, subtracting, perplexing himself with many errors.

S. Behrman, the clerk, and the man with the door-closing apparatus involved themselves in a long argument, gazing intently at the top panel of the door. The man who had come to fix the apparatus was unwilling to guarantee it, unless a sign was put on the outside of the door warning incomers that the door was self-closing. This sign would cost fifteen cents extra.

"But you didn't say anything about this when the thing was or-

dered," declared S. Behrman. "No, I won't pay it, my friend. It's an overcharge."

"You needn't think," observed the clerk, "that just because you are dealing with the railroad you are going to work us."

Genslinger came in, accompanied by Delaney. S. Behrman and the clerk, abruptly dismissing the man with the door-closing machine, put themselves behind the counter and engaged in conversation with these two. Genslinger introduced Delaney. The buster had a string of horses he was shipping southward. No doubt he had come to make arrangements with the railroad in the matter of stock cars. The conference of the four men was amicable in the extreme.

Dyke, studying the figures on the back of the envelope, came forward again. Absorbed only in his own distress, he ignored the editor and the cowpuncher.

"Say," he hazarded, "how about this? I make out —"

"We've told you what our rates are, Mr. Dyke," exclaimed the clerk angrily. "That's all the arrangement we will make. Take it or leave it." He turned again to Genslinger, giving the ex-engineer his back.

Dyke moved away and stood for a moment in the center of the room, staring at the figures on the envelope.

"I don't see," he muttered, "just what I'm going to do. No, I don't see what I'm going to do at all."

Ruggles came in, bringing with him two other men in whom Dyke recognized dummy buyers of the Los Muertos and Osterman ranchos. They brushed by him, jostling his elbow, and as he went out of the door he heard them exchange jovial greetings with Delaney, Genslinger, and S. Behrman.

Dyke went down the stairs to the street and proceeded onward aimlessly in the direction of the Yosemite House, fingering the yellow envelope and looking vacantly at the sidewalk.

There was a stoop to his massive shoulders. His great arms dangled loosely at his sides, the palms of his hands open.

As he went along, a certain feeling of shame touched him. Surely his predicament must be apparent to every passer-by. No doubt, everyone recognized the unsuccessful man in the very way he slouched along. The young girls in lawns, muslins, and garden hats, returning from the post office, their hands full of letters, must surely see in him the type of the failure, the bankrupt.

Then brusquely his tardy rage flamed up. No, it was not his fault; he had made no mistake. His energy, industry, and foresight had



been sound. He had been merely the object of a colossal trick, a sordid injustice; a victim of the insatiate greed of the monster, caught and choked by one of those millions of tentacles suddenly reaching up from below, from out the dark beneath his feet, coiling around his throat, throttling him, strangling him, sucking his blood. For a moment he thought of the courts, but instantly laughed at the idea. What court was immune from the power of the monster? Ah, the rage of helplessness, the fury of impotence! No help, no hope — ruined in a brief instant — he a veritable giant, built of great sinews, powerful, in the full tide of his manhood, having all his health, all his wits. How could he now face his home? How could he tell his mother of this catastrophe? And Sidney — the little tad; how could he explain to her this wretchedness — how soften her disappointment? How keep the tears from out her eyes — how keep alive her confidence in him — her faith in his resources?

Bitter, fierce, ominous, his wrath loomed up in his heart. His fists gripped tight together; his teeth clenched. Oh, for a moment to have his hand upon the throat of S. Behrman, wringing the breath from him, wrenching out the red life of him — staining the street with the blood sucked from the veins of the people!

To the first friend that he met, Dyke told the tale of the tragedy, and to the next, and to the next. The affair went from mouth to mouth, spreading with electrical swiftness, overpassing and running ahead of Dyke himself, so that by the time he reached the lobby of the Yosemite House he found his story awaiting him. A group formed about him. In his immediate vicinity business for the instant was suspended. The group swelled. One after another of his friends added themselves to it. Magnus Derrick joined it, and Annixter.<sup>1</sup> Again and again Dyke recounted the matter, beginning with the time when he was discharged from the same corporation's service for refusing to accept an unfair wage. His voice quivered with exasperation; his heavy frame shook with rage; his eyes were injected, bloodshot; his face flamed vermilion, while his deep bass rumbled throughout the running comments of his auditors like the thunderous reverberation of diapason.

From all points of view the story was discussed by those who listened to him, now in the heat of excitement; now calmly, judiciously. One verdict, however, prevailed. It was voiced by Annixter: "You're stuck. You can roar till you're black in the face, but you can't buck against the railroad. There's nothing to be done."

<sup>1</sup> Derrick . . . Annixter: men prominent in the league formed to fight the railroad rates.

"You can shoot the ruffian; you can shoot S. Behrman," clamored one of the group. "Yes, sir, you can shoot him."

"Poor fool," commented Annixter, turning away.

Nothing to be done. No, there was nothing to be done — not one thing. Dyke, at last alone and driving his team out of the town, turned the business confusedly over in his mind from end to end. Advice, suggestion, even offers of financial aid had been showered upon him from all directions. Friends were not wanting who heatedly presented to his consideration all manner of ingenious plans, wonderful devices. They were worthless. The tentacle held fast. He was stuck.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How does the author build up the impression of Dyke's optimism and good spirits in the early part of this narrative? What omen of trouble appears in the story before Dyke actually hears of the rate change? Why did the rate change mean ruin for him?

2. What is the purpose of introducing the incident about the door-closing gadget? of the broncobuster shipping his horses?

3. What passages refer to the title of the novel from which this selection was taken? Does the comparison strike you as being effective? Is it justified in so far as this incident is concerned?

4. Do you agree with Annixter that there was nothing Dyke could do about his predicament? How did the legislation putting freight rates under supervision of the Interstate Commerce Commission afford safety from such disaster?

#### For Your Vocabulary

5. You can find no better time to learn the words *tentacle* (page 1123) and *prehensile* (page 1126) than when the image of an octopus is fresh in your mind. Its *tentacles* are those waving arms, feeling about for a victim; and when they find one they are powerfully *prehensile*, able to seize. Do you know the word *tentative*, for feeling the way or trying out? It comes from the same stem as *tentacle*. A *tentative* plan is only a trial, an experiment, not a course of action to hold to at all costs. *Prehensile*, on the other hand, comes from a word meaning to seize and hold. A monkey has a *prehensile* tail; a child eating an ice-cream cone seems to have a *prehensile* tongue. We use many other words built on the same stem. An *apprehensive* person seizes on causes for alarm before they are justified. If he is mistaken, the idea is a *misapprehension* — as is any other idea we mistakenly hold. We *comprehend* what our minds can seize and hold, and new ideas are within our *comprehension* if we are able to grasp or understand them.

## MR. DOOLEY ON MACHINERY

by FINLEY PETER DUNNE (1867-1936)

Not all the writing about the rapid rise of industry in America was solemn and serious. One of the most popular and influential commentators between 1898 and 1910 was Finley Peter Dunne, a Chicago newspaperman who expressed his opinions in a humorous vein through the mouth of Martin Dooley, an Irish saloonkeeper who commented to his friend Hennessy on what he read in the newspapers. Dunne took up every important issue of his day, following no political party but simply expressing his own common-sense attitude. He had courage, too, for he often championed unpopular figures in the news, and during the muckraking era he criticized reformers as well as the bosses of political machines. You can measure his popularity by the fact that nine "Mr. Dooley" books were published between 1898 and 1911. In this article Mr. Dooley reflects on the rise of the machine in America and just how much good all our inventions do us.

MR. DOOLEY was reading from a paper. "' We live,' he says, ' in an age iv wondhers. Niver before in th' histhry iv th' wurruld has such pro-gress been made.'

" Thru wurruds an' often spoken. Even in me time things has changed. Whin I was a la-ad Long Jawn Wintworth cud lean his elbows on th' highest buildin' in this town. It took two months to come here fr'm Pittsburg on a limited raft an' a stagecoach that run fr'm La Salle to Mrs. Murphy's hotel. They wasn't anny tillygraft that I can raymimber an' th' sthreetcar was pulled be a mule an' dhruv be an engineer be th' name iv Mulligan. We thought we was a pro-grissive people. Ye bet we did. But look at us today. I go be Casey's house tonight an' there it is a fine story-an'-a-half frame house with Casey settin' on th' dure shtep dhinkin' out iv a pail. I go be Casey's house tomorra an' it's a hole in th' groun'. I rayturn to Casey's house on Thursdah an' it's a fifty-eight-story buildin' with a morgedge onto it an' they're thinkin' iv takin' it down an' replacin' it with a modhren sthtructure. Th' shoes that Corrigan th' cobbler wanst wurrucked on fr a week, hammerin' away like a woodpecker, is now tossed out be th' dozens fr'm th' mouth iv a masheen. A cow goes lowin' softly in to Armour's an' comes out glue, beef, gelatin, fertylizer, celooloid, joolry, sofy cushions, hair restorer, washin' sody, soap, lithrachoor, an' bedsprings so quick that while aft she's still cow, for'ard she may be anything fr'm buttons to Pannyma hats. I

can go fr'm Chicago to New York in twinty hours; but I don't have to, thank th' Lord. Thirty years ago we thought 'twas marvelous to be able to tillygraft a man in Saint Joe an' get an answer that night. Now, be wireless tillygraft ye can get an answer before ye sind th' tillygram if they ain't careful. Me friend Macroni has done that. Be manes iv his wondher iv science a man on a ship in mid-ocean can sind a tillygram to a man on shore, if he has a confid'rate on board. That's all he needs. Be mechanical science an' thrust in th' op'rator annywan can set on th' shore iv Noofoundland an' chat with a frind in th' County Kerry.

"Yes, sir, mechanical science has made gr-reat sthrives. Whin I was a young man we used to think Hor'ce Greeley was th' gr-reatest livin' American. He was a gran' man, a gran' man with feathers beneath his chin an' specs on his nose like th' windows in a diver's helmet. His pollyticks an' mine cudden't live in th' same neighborhood, but he was a gran' man all th' same. We used to take th' *Cleveland Plain Daler* in thim days f'r raycreation an' th' New York *Thrybune* f'r exercise. 'Twas considhered a test iv a good-natured dimmycrat if he cud read an article in th' *Thrybune* without havin' to do th' stations iv th' cross<sup>1</sup> afterward f'r what he said. I almost did wanst, but they was a line at th' end about a frind iv mine be th' name iv Andrew Jackson an' I wint out an' broke up a Methodist prayer meetin'. He was th' boy that cud put it to ye so that if ye voted th' dimmycrat tickit it was jus' th' same as demandin' a place in purgatory. Th' farmers wud plant annything fr'm a rutybaga to a Congressman on his advice. He niver had money enough to buy a hat, but he cud go to th' Scretary iv th' Treasury an' tell him who's pitcher to put on th' useful valentines we thrade f'r groceries.

"But if Hor'ce Greeley was alive today where'd he be? Settin' on three inches iv th' edge iv a chair in th' outside office iv me frind Pierpont Morgan waitin' f'r his turn. In th' line is th' Imp'rор iv Germany, th' new cook, th' prisidint iv a railroad, th' cap'n iv th' yacht, Rimbrandt th' painther, Jawn W. Grates, an' Hor'ce. Afther a while th' boy at th' dure says, 'Ye're next, ol' party. Shtep lively, f'r th' boss has had a Weehawken Peerooginy sawed off on him this mornin' an' he mustn't be kep' waitin'.' An' th' iditor goes in. 'Who ar-re ye?' says th' gr-reat man, givin' him wan iv thim piercin' looks that whin a man gets it he has to be sewed up at wanst. 'I'm ye'er iditor,'

<sup>1</sup> do th' stations iv th' cross: say a prayer before each of the fourteen pictures, placed in a Catholic church, representing stages of Christ's progress with the cross on the way to his crucifixion. The prayers are a special Lenten feature, but are also sometimes assigned as penance for sin.

says Hor'ce. 'Which wan?' says Pierpont. 'Number two hundhred an' eight.' 'What's ye'er spishilty?' 'Tahriff an' th' improvemint iv th' wurruld,' says Hor'ce. 'See Perkins,' says Pierpont, an' th' interview is over. Now what's made th' change? Mechanical science, Hinmissy. Somewan made a masheen that puts steel billets within th' reach iv all. Hince Charlie Schwab.

"What's it done f'r th' wurruld? says ye. It's done ivrything. It's give us fast ships an' an autymatic hist f'r th' hod, an' small flats an' a taste iv solder in th' peaches. If annybody says th' wurruld ain't betther off thin it was, tell him that a masheen has been invinted that makes honey out iv pethrolyum. If he asts ye why they ain't anny Shakesperes today, say, 'No, but we no longer make sausages be hand.'

"'Tis pro-gress. We live in a cinchry iv pro-gress an' I thank th' Lord I've seen most iv it. Man an' boy I've lived pretty near through this wondherful age. If I was proud I cud say I seen more thin Julyus Caesar iver see or cared to. An' here I am, I'll not say how old, still pushin' th' malt acrost th' counther at me thirsty counthrymen. All around me is th' refinemints iv mechanical janius. Instead iv broachin' th' beer kag with a club an' dhrawin' th' beer through a fassit as me Puritan forefathers done, I have that wondher iv invintive science th' beer pump. I cheat mesilf with a cash raygisther. I cut off th' end iv me good cigar with an injanyous device an' pull th' cork out iv a bottle with a conthrivance that wud've made that frind that Hogan boasts about, that ol' boy Archy Meeds, think they was witchcraft in th' house. Science has been a gr-reat blessin' to me. But amidst all these granjoors here am I th' same ol' antiquated combination iv bellows an' pump I always was. Not so good. Time has worn me out. Th' years like little boys with jackknives has carved their names in me top. Ivry day I have to write off something f'r deprecyation. 'Tis about time f'r whoiver owns me to wurruk me off on a thrust. Mechanical science has done ivrything f'r me but help me. I suppose I ought to feel supeeryor to me father. He niver see a high buildin' but he didn't want to. He cudden't come here in five days but he was a wise man an' if he cud've come in three he'd have stayed in th' County Roscommon.

"Th' pa-apers tells me that midical science has kept pace with th' hop-skip-an'-a-jump iv mechanical inginooty. Th' doctors has found th' mikrobe iv ivrything fr'm lumbago to love an' fr'm jandice to jealousy, but if a brick bounces on me head I'm crated up th' same as iv yore an' put away. Rockyfellar can make a pianny out iv a bar'l

iv crude ile, but no wan has been able to make a blade iv hair grow on Rockyfellar. They was a doctor over in France that discovered a kind iv a thing that if 'twas pumped into ye wud make ye live till people got so tired iv seein' ye around they cud scream. He died th' nex' year iv premachure ol' age. They was another doctor cud insure whether th' nex' wan wud be a boy or a girl. All ye had to do was to decide wud it be Arthur or Ethel an' lave him know. He left a fam'ly iv unmarredgeable daughters.

"I sometimes wondher whether pro-gress is anny more thin a kind iv a shift. It's like a merry-go-round. We get up on a speckled wooden horse an' th' mechanical pianny plays a chune an' away we go, hollerin'. We think we're thravelin' like th' divvle but th' man that doesn't care about merry-go-rounds knows that we will come back where we were. We get out dizzy an' sick an' lay on th' grass an' gasp, 'Where am I? Is this th' meelin-yum?'<sup>1</sup> An' he says, 'No, 'tis Ar-rchey Road.' Father Kelly says th' Agyptians done things we cudden't do an' th' Romans put up skyscrapers an' aven th' Chinks had tillyphones an' phonygrafts.

"I've been up to th' top iv th' very highest buildin' in town, Hin-nissy, an' I wasn't anny nearer Hivin thin if I was in th' sthreet. Th' stars was as far away as iver. An' down beneath is a lot iv us runnin' an' lapin' an' jumpin' about, pushin' each other over, haulin' little sthrips iv ir'n to pile up in little buildin's that ar-re called skyscrapers but not be th' sky; wurrukin' night an' day to make a masheen that'll carry us fr'm wan jack-rabbit colony to another an' yellin', 'Pro-gress!' Pro-gress, oho! I can see th' stars winkin' at each other an' sayin', 'Ain't they funny! Don't they think they're playin' the divil!'

"No, sir, masheens ain't done much f'r man. I can't get up anny kind iv fam'ly inthrest f'r a steam dredge or a hydhraulic hist. I want to see skyscrapin' men. But I won't. We're about th' same hight as we always was, th' same hight an' build, composed iv th' same inflammable an' perishyable mateeryal, an exthra hazardous risk, unimproved an' li'ble to collapse. We do make pro-gress, but it's th' same kind Julyus Caesar made an' ivry wan has made befure or since an' in this age iv masheenery we're still burrid be hand."

"What d'ye think iv th' man down in Pinnsylvanya who says th' Lord an' him is partners in a coal mine?" asked Mr. Hennessy, who wanted to change the subject.

"Has he divided th' profits?" asked Mr. Dooley.

<sup>1</sup> **meelin-yum**: millennium See "For Your Vocabulary," page 1169.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Does Mr. Dooley seem to have a good idea of the growing importance of machinery in American life? What kinds does he mention? Have we any still more astonishing machines today?
2. What is his conclusion about the importance of machinery? How does he back up his conclusion? Do you agree with him?
3. What dialect does Mr. Dooley use? Is it as clearly indicated by the spelling as Thomas Augustine Daly's Italian dialect (see page 1118)? What does it contribute to the effect of the article?
4. Do you think you would read "Mr. Dooley" if he were appearing in your daily paper? Why? How is he different from most popular commentators of our own times? Does he have anything in common with any of the modern commentators?

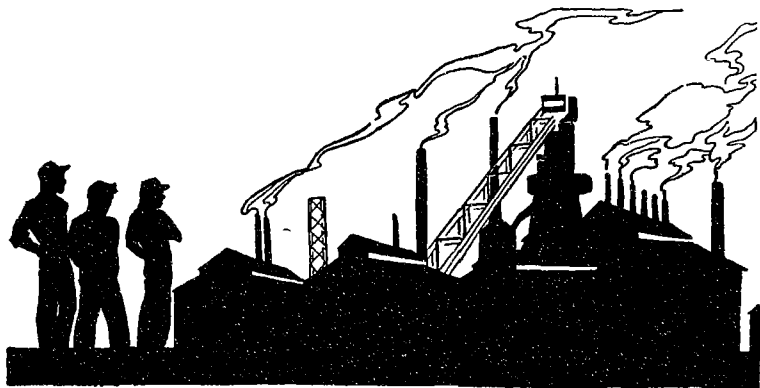
*For Ambitious Students*

5. Assemble a collection of examples or make a study of machinery as it appears today in one of the following: (a) literature, (b) art, (c) cartoons.

*For Further Reading*

- Bowman, J. C., *Pecos Bill*  
 Buttree, J. M., *The Rhythm of the Red Man*  
 Casson, Herbert, *The Romance of Steel*; *The Romance of the Telephone*,  
*The Romance of the Reaper*  
 Chapman, Arthur, *The Pony Express*  
 Dobie, J. F., *A Vaquero of the Brush Country*  
 Ellis, Anne, *The Life of an Ordinary Woman*  
 Haycox, Ernest, *Trouble Shooter*  
 Hough, Emerson, *The Story of the Cowboy*; *North of '36*  
 James, Will, *Home Ranch*; *Smoky*  
 Lane, R. W., *Let the Hurricane Roar*; *Free Land*  
 Lummis, C. F., *Pueblo Indian Folk-Stories*  
 Orth, S. P., *Our Foreigners*  
 Roosevelt, T. R., *The Rough Riders*  
 Sullivan, O. M., *The Empire Builder*  
 Thorp, N. H., *Songs of the Cowboys*  
 Vestal, Stanley, *Sitting Bull*; *Warpath*

See also page 249 of the Novels for Home Reading and pages 452-53 of the Biography Reading List.



## *Chapter VIII*

### THE RISE OF REALISM

(1870-1914)

OUT OF the new order of things as described in Chapters V, VI, and VII came new developments in literature. The work of the young writers who sprang up after the War between the States and reached their heyday in the latter part of the nineteenth century was noticeably different from that of the prewar writers. We saw how the earlier group stood firmly on their Americanism, feeling themselves a unit distinct from European literature, yet how at the same time they were influenced by the romanticism spreading throughout the entire world of their day. Now let us see what happened to these two trends after the War between the States.

**The West speaks up.** The great stretch of land west of the Appalachians had now passed through the first stage of discovery and exploration, and much of it through the second stage of settlement. The disrupting war was over. The West was ready for the third stage — a conscious attempt to put into artistic form the significance of these re-United States. The West now became vocal for literary recognition as the East had fifty years earlier. Since California had just gone through its picturesque “boom” of gold discovery and had felt little of the immediate impact of the war, it was natural that California should first develop this new literature. The *Overland Monthly*, first literary magazine on the West coast, gave an outlet, and its editor, Bret Harte, gave the main impetus to a new kind of



story — that of the Western mining camp. The East, now strongly in the grip of excitement over the postwar Western movement, read these stories with avidity. Writers in other parts of the country were influenced by Harte's success. They began to write of the places and people they had known well, and with a certain local pride made the most of dialect and regional oddities. Thus came about the vogue of the "local-color" story of the seventies to nineties. To study this period one needs to make a literary map of the United States by regions. Writers can hardly be talked about entirely apart from geography. Until you have associated many an author with his proper setting, you do not know the most important thing about him. New England lost her leadership in the world of letters. The prominent publishers might still be along the Atlantic seaboard, but their presses were fed from North, South, and West. The new spread of literature included all types, poetry as well as fiction. The great change was like the opening of an immense fan stemming from the little corner of the Northeast, unfurling till it covered the continent.

Naturally enough, with more writing being done and with each author's concern to display effectively his own neighborhood, there appeared quantities of interesting but rather mediocre work. The very nature of the "local-color" movement tended to emphasize pure externals. What the characters wore and the dialect they spoke loomed larger than the inner meaning of their lives or the significance of what they said to one another. We still have regional literature — for with all our talk of standardization there are still marked sectional differences in our country; but to win any great recognition today the writer must subordinate his background of local conditions to the more important human drama. Of course, the best writers of those days did that very thing; but others of the "local-color" school sound decidedly superficial when read today.

**The meaning of realism.** The second great tendency of the pre-war period, romanticism, also changed markedly during the postwar half of the century. Not all at once, of course. Romanticism of a sort still lives. But from being the dominant mood of our literature it gradually gave way to another point of view, the realistic.

Let us summarize the differences between the two. The realist looks intently at what is before him and wishes to reproduce it just as it is (whether in art or literature) for others to look at. The romanticist looks at what is before him, but he wishes to see something else in or beyond it. He thinks that to reproduce it exactly as it is is unimportant. Sometimes, in fact, he doesn't even look very intently at

the object before him to fix the details of it in mind, but rather squints at it from different angles to find artistic effects, or dreams about it without even looking at all. The realist considers this careless and flighty. He observes everything, and he prefers good strong sunlight to show up all the details, so as not to gloss over unpleasant aspects as the romanticist usually does. The realist prides himself on being honest and objective and strong — not afraid of what he sees and willing to think out the problems of the world in the light of facts. The romanticist prides himself on being sensitive and discriminating — able to interpret life beyond its obvious facts and influence toward high and noble ideals. As we scan the four points of view we have had so far — Puritanism, common sense, romanticism, and realism — we can see that there are certain points in common between the first and third, which emphasize a world beyond the material world of the senses, and also between the second and fourth, which focus directly on that material world.

**Forces leading to realism.** We cannot say that any one thing tipped the scales toward realism along in the seventies, but many forces contributed. Like romanticism, realism was a general European movement. Important Russian and French writers were in the forefront of the movement abroad, but they did not seem to make a great impression on Americans at first because we were in the midst of the struggle over slavery and its aftermath — too busy to be much concerned with foreign writers. But William Dean Howells, escaping the war years by being our consul to Venice at that time, had a close bond with European culture. When he returned home, he became the chief apostle of realism on our side of the Atlantic. As editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and later *Scribner's Magazine*, he was in a position to influence the thinking of literary people throughout the United States.

The situation was ripe for an injection of realism. The war had left its desolation. Six hundred thousand of the best men of the land had died on battlefields. The freeing of the slaves had left a terrific social and economic problem. Soldiers had come home disillusioned. The country was turning to industrial life, which brought a monotonous daily grind to thousands of people. There was great poverty, drabness of living. These were the unpleasant facts, from which the romantic person could escape into the life or the literature of a far-distant land but which the realistic person had to meet and face. Then, too, as the West was settled it became less the glamorous symbol of adventure and opportunity and more a world of hard fact.

## THE RISE OF REALISM

|      | 1850                                   | 1900                                |                         |
|------|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
|      | 1861 1865<br>War between<br>the States | 1898<br>Spanish-<br>American<br>War | 1914-18<br>World War    |
|      |  |                                     | 1939<br>European<br>War |
| 1835 | Mark Twain                             |                                     | 1910                    |
| 1836 | Bret Harte                             |                                     | 1902                    |
| 1836 | T.B. Aldrich                           |                                     | 1907                    |
| 1837 | W.D. Howells                           |                                     | 1920                    |
| 1841 | Joaquin Miller                         |                                     | 1913                    |
| 1841 | E.R. Sill                              | 1887                                |                         |
| 1842 | A. Bierce                              |                                     | 1914                    |
| 1843 | Henry James                            |                                     | 1916                    |
| 1844 | G.W. Cable                             |                                     | 1925                    |
| 1848 | J.C. Harris                            |                                     | 1908                    |
| 1849 | Sarah O. Jewett                        |                                     | 1909                    |
| 1849 | J.W. Riley                             |                                     | 1916                    |
|      | 1850 Eugene Field                      | 1895                                |                         |
|      | 1852                                   | Edwin Markham                       | 1940                    |
|      | 1853 T. N. Page                        |                                     | 1922                    |
|      | 1855 H.C. Bunner                       | 1896                                |                         |
|      | 1860 Hamlin Garland                    |                                     | 1940                    |
|      | 1861 Bliss Carman                      |                                     | 1929                    |
|      | 1862 O. Henry                          |                                     | 1910                    |
|      | 1862 M. L. W. Freeman                  |                                     | 1930                    |
|      | 1864 R. Hovey                          |                                     | 1900                    |
|      | 1870 F. Norris                         |                                     | 1902                    |
|      | 1871 S. Crane                          |                                     | 1900                    |
|      | 1876 Jack London                       |                                     | 1916                    |

How realism affected the local-color movement. These two movements — the spread of regional literature and the rise of realism were practically simultaneous. Gradually, realism changed the tone of the regional literature. The earlier "local colorists" were likely to have the romantic viewpoint; as time went on, regional literature

came to be more and more concerned with the commonplace or the distressing details of life.

**Romanticism versus realism.** If contemporary life had ceased to be romantic, there was still the past. Just at the turn of the century there was a sudden vogue for romantic historical fiction. These books were entertaining, often colorful, but on the whole rather insignificant as to character portrayal or historical interpretation. Side by side with these books were appearing grim stories of the horrors of the War between the States, the hardships of prairie life, the ruthlessness of big business, and the miseries of the city slums. As literature, the grim stories far outweighed the gallant ones. Their genuineness and intensity made for real power. The dialect of the "local colorists" began to go out of fashion (for which the typesetters must have been grateful). So did the swashbuckling of the historical romanticists. Into the foreground came the struggle of man against his environment, the clashes of great conflicting ideas in the world, the ironical plays of fate against man. They were the hard, real things that people were up against in actual life. Then came the World War, which put the realistic point of view firmly in the ascendant. The war may not have made the world safe for democracy, but it certainly made it safe for plain-spoken realism. Our modern period, dating from that war, was definitely committed to realistic literature.

### I. *Howells and James — Truth-tellers in the Novel*

**William Dean Howells (1837-1920).** Howells stands in the forefront of the new literature following the War between the States. He was the first writer born west of the Alleghenies to be accepted by the Eastern group, and he was the great advocate of the realistic movement. Ohio may seem pretty far east to the present generation; but when Howells was a boy, it was still part of the West to New Englanders. His boyhood home, which he describes at length in two of his books, was the town of Martins Ferry, Ohio, primitive in its comforts and democratic in its manners. It imbued him with a love of ordinary people and the ordinary events of their lives. The young man had no advanced schooling, but learned his writing craft through the printing press and the newspaper. In a day when the youth of the East was turning its face westward, Howells faced toward the East. At twenty-three he became American consul at Venice in return for a campaign biography of Lincoln. Here he stayed till the

end of the war. Back in Boston, his lack of a college education proved no real handicap among the Brahmins; and at thirty-five he was made editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, serving in a distinguished succession — Lowell, Fields, Howells, and Aldrich. Within a dozen years he had written two of the great novels of early American realism and had contributed the manifesto of the movement.

**What Howells was trying to do.** Howells had no sympathy with wild supposition and unreined imagination. He had no wish to clothe his characters in a romantic cloud, or people his world with perfect heroes and dastardly villains. In a series of pertinent statements he explained his purpose better than anyone could possibly do for him. He said:

. . . the sincere observer of man will not desire to look upon his heroic or occasional phases, but will seek him in his habitual moods of vacancy and tiresomeness.

I hope the time is coming when not only the artist but the common, average man, who always "has the standard of art in his power," will also have the courage to apply it and will reject the ideal grasshopper wherever he finds it, in science, in literature, in art, because it is not "simple, natural, and honest," because it is not like a real grasshopper.

It will not do to lift either houses or men far out of the average; they become spectacles, ceremonies; they cease to have charm, to have character, which belongs to the levels of life where alone there are ease and comfort and human nature may be itself.

That is what Howells wanted American writing to do: to seek the average man in his ordinary life, not to idealize but to tell the truth.

**What Howells did.** Throughout his long life, extending almost to our own times, Howells was loyal to this creed. He wrote nearly eighty books — novels, reminiscences, criticism, farces — all dealing with the real life that lies immediately about our doorsteps. His books, says Carl Van Doren, represent "the most considerable transcript of American life yet made by one man."

Yet we must realize that the realism of Howells is far different from what modern writers consider honest realism. He was at the beginning of the movement and he was emphatic in asserting that some subjects were not to be written about, real or unreal. Whitman's poems shocked Howells just as much as they shocked Longfellow. He would not have approved of the subject matter of such men as Faulkner and Hemingway, realists in our own day. Howells wrote, therefore, a sort of scrubbed and polished realism which would not offend the women who read his books.

His greatest novel is *The Rise of Silas Lapham* (1884), a study of the life of the newly rich and the growth of character which accompanies later financial failure. This is one of the best examples of the literature showing changes brought about by industrial conditions. The contrast between the family of the self-made paint manufacturer and an old cultivated Boston family is typical of the day of sudden great fortunes. Another fine novel is *A Modern Instance* (1882), showing the unhappiness of a woman married to a conceited, irresponsible newspaperman. We must not forget Howells' numerous short farces, of which "The Mouse Trap" is typical, nor his pictures of his boyhood home in *A Boy's Town* and *Years of My Youth*, nor his many pleasing travel sketches, nor his reminiscences of his wide circle of literary acquaintances. In *Criticism and Fiction* (1891) he summed up his beliefs, which, together with his novels, deserve credit for bringing American fiction down from its ivory tower to kitchen and parlor. Howells, it has been said, was "in himself almost an entire literary movement, almost an academy."

Henry James (1843-1916). The life spans of Howells and Henry James were practically the same, and they both turned their faces eastward in opposition to the great westward swing. In other ways, however, their lives are interestingly different. Since James was born in New York, turning east in his case meant toward Europe. In fact, he was the most European of all American authors and actually became a British citizen in protest against American neutrality at the beginning of the World War. James's unique field was the "international" novel. He had plenty of opportunities to study it, and in many of his best books the plot centers around a young and charming American thrust into the complex and sophisticated society of European capitals. Sometimes he reversed the situation and brought the Europeans to our shores. Some of these books are *A Passionate Pilgrim*, *Daisy Miller*, *Roderick Hudson*, *The American*, and *A Portrait of a Lady*—all written between 1871 and 1881.

The other thing that most interested James was a sort of microscopic analysis of character. It was perhaps significant that his brother was William James, the great psychologist, for Henry James was one of those writers (like Hawthorne) who are not so much interested in what people do as in what they *are* and what they *think*. As the years went by, he thought less and less about plot and devoted more and more attention to character, thought, and emotion. His style became constantly more involved as he tried to analyze more minutely. Some wag said that William James wrote psychology like

a novelist, but Henry wrote novels like psychology. Of course, this subtlety did not help the sale of his books; for they were over the head of the average reader. But America has never had another writer who could analyze a character, a situation, or the manners of society with greater skill and penetration.

## 2. *Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)—A Lochinvar from the West*

O Young Lochinvar is come out of the West  
In all the wide Border his steed is the best;  
And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,  
He rode all unarm'd, and he rode all alone.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens, whom the world knows as Mark Twain, was indeed the Lochinvar of American literature. He came out of the real West (that is, west of the Mississippi); his books were, indeed, the best that came from beyond the mountains; he had no weapons of college education, fortune, and family backing but just his pen, a veritable broadsword; he rode all alone — cared little for convention, stood on his own feet. There never was anyone just like him. "Here at last," says V. L. Parrington, "was an authentic American — a native writer thinking his own thoughts, using his own eyes, speaking his own dialect — everything European fallen away, the last shred of feudal culture gone, local and Western yet continental."

Mark Twain reminds us of certain other Americans: Franklin for his shrewd humor and his unaffectedness; Whitman for his buoyancy, his democracy, and his Americanism; Lincoln for his Western background, his sincerity, and his unliterary quality. Howells said of him:

Of all the literary men I have ever known, he was the most unliterary in his make-up and manner. His manner was as entirely his own as if no one had even written before. He wrote as he thought, and as all men think, without sequence, without an eye to what went before or what should come after.

In other words, he was himself; and in that fact lie both his greatness and his limitations.

Mark Twain's humor. Laughter followed Mark Twain wherever he went. He convulsed a San Francisco audience with a lecture on the Sandwich Islands. He made thousands of readers chuckle with his story of the jumping frog. A newspaper sent him to Europe and

the Holy Land, and he mailed back letters that were made into the humorous narrative of *Innocents Abroad* (1869), poking fun alike at the traditions of Europe and the gullibility of American tourists. This hearty humor, this disregard for traditions, at first shocked the New England which was used to the urbane, eighteenth-century wit of Doctor Holmes. Mark Twain's humor was vastly different. It was derived from the tall story of the West, a story made funny by its ludicrous improbability. The Western humor was surprising at first, and then it won New England and all the rest of the literary world.

**The great stories of Mark Twain.** Mark Twain's greatest books, probably the greatest boys' books ever written, although they have as many readers among grown-ups as among children, are *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1884). Before the time of their appearance, boys' books had usually been written to teach or to warn. The characters either had led exemplary lives and received their rewards or had led wicked lives and received their punishments. Tom and Huck do neither of these. They are real boys. They lead normal lives. They are sometimes bad and sometimes good. They win our hearts, and they make us laugh. Sometimes they make us cry. They are *real*.

A third book about a boy's growing up, *The Tragedy of Pudd'n-head Wilson* (1894), is only slightly inferior to these two great stories.

**Memories of the West.** Two of Mark Twain's best books record memories of his life in the West. *Roughing It* (1872) is one of our best pictures of the days of the stagecoach, the buffalo, the mining camp, and the frontier. *Life on the Mississippi* (1883) is a fine account of how the author learned to be a pilot in the days when the river was uncharted and dangerous, and of his experience traveling up and down that country of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn (see page 1011).

**Other books by Mark Twain.** *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* was Mark Twain's comment on the stories of knight-hood and feudalism.

When an author becomes famous as a humorist, he pays a penalty: he is never taken seriously. Every time he speaks, people expect to laugh. Mark Twain paid the penalty. He wanted to write some serious books, but nobody wanted to read them. He wrote the serious *Joan of Arc* (1896) and said it was his own favorite among his books, but it has never been the popular favorite.

An illuminating and a witty book is *Mark Twain's Autobiography* (1924), a chapter from which is on page 403.



### 3. Bret Harte and the Local Colorists

**Bret Harte.** The names of Bret Harte and Mark Twain are often associated as the popularizers of Western fiction. But Harte was not a native Westerner like Clemens. Born and brought up in the East, he went to California when he was nineteen and stayed there fifteen years. There he acquainted himself with cities and mining camps, prospectors, gamblers, authors, and editors. He became an editor himself and got his chance to transcribe the vivid life of frontier California in the stories that made him famous — "The Luck of Roaring Camp," "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" (see page 103), "Tennessee's Partner," and many others.

No prospector ever dug richer gold out of California than Bret Harte. The fictional Mr. Oakhurst was worth more to him than one hundred nuggets of gold. With an offer of ten thousand dollars a year from the *Atlantic Monthly*, Harte hurried back East — to live thereafter in New York and Europe. He continued to write voluminously; but he never bettered his first collection, *The Luck of Roaring Camp and Other Stories* (1870). Harte's stories were told in the romantic rather than the realistic mood. His main characters were usually the diamond-in-the-rough variety, under whose uncouth exterior lurked elements of sentiment and heroism to be called forth in the presence of the weak or helpless. This pattern Harte repeated again and again. He seemed to view the mining camp as an outsider looking in for striking theatrical effects. Therefore, his stories, lacking the genuine quality of Mark Twain's, are less highly regarded by critics today than in his own day when they were novelties.

Harte also wrote several long novels, but they never attained the success of his short stories. A few of his poems, however, have survived, such as "Plain Language from Truthful James" (see page 695).

**The local-color writers.** Close upon the heels of Harte's fame appeared the local colorists in various parts of the continent. These writers cast the glamour of romance over their particular regions, yet painted the picture with accuracy of detail. No longer could a romantic writer describe a land he knew only from hearsay and reading. These writers made firsthand observations, and that was the entering wedge at least of realism. But on the whole their stories were in the romantic manner.

In California, Helen Hunt Jackson's *Ramona* showed the injustices suffered by the Indians of the Southwest and pictured the poetic background of the Spanish missions.

The flavor of old French and Spanish civilizations lingered about the pages of George Washington Cable's short stories of New Orleans, *Old Creole Days*, and his long novel *The Grandissimes*. He excelled in painting secluded and charming Creole women.

In Georgia, Joel Chandler Harris caught the mood and idiom of the Negro plantation tales in his various collections of Uncle Remus stories (see page 114).

In Virginia, Thomas Nelson Page's *Marse Chan* and *In Old Virginia* looked back wistfully at the departed glories of great plantation houses. Faithful old Negro servants, beautiful young girls bereft of their lovers, and chivalrous Southern gentlemen were his stock in trade. *Red Rock* is one of the first novels we have of Reconstruction days in the South.

In Kentucky, James Lane Allen wrote the charming idyl *A Kentucky Cardinal* and the short stories *Flute and Violin*.

In Tennessee, Mary Murfree, under the pseudonym of Charles Egbert Craddock, pictured sparsely settled communities with her *In the Tennessee Mountains*. Thus almost every part of the South, clear across the continent, had someone to distill its essential flavors.

The North, too, had its local colorists, though realism gained an earlier start there than in the South. Sarah Orne Jewett's native Maine coast, rather delicately idealized, appears in *Deephaven* and *The Country of the Pointed Fins*. But her successor in the nineties, Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, was a disciple of Howells and a professed realist. The stories in her *A New England Nun* show the drabness, the pride that concealed poverty, and the restricted life of static New England towns. Mrs. Freeman was the most powerful of the women writers of her day. Her long career brought her well past the World War, though her best work was done earlier.

The Middle West came into the picture with Edward Eggleston's *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, written just a year after Harte's first book of stories. This novel is somewhat divided between two points of view, the romantic and the realistic, but, on the whole, Midwestern literature took the realistic turn. Mark Twain's great books were, of course, the pre-eminent pictures of the Mississippi Valley during the seventies and eighties.

#### 4. *Poetry's Westward Ho!*

As fiction was spreading on the western side of the Appalachians so, too, was poetry. Of the group included in the section called Transition Poets only one — Edward Rowland Sill — was an Easterner by

birth, and even he went to California from college for the rest of his life. The geographical enlargement of poetry is evident. James Whitcomb Riley extended it to the Indiana farm; Eugene Field, to the newspaper offices of large Midwestern cities and to the gold fields of Colorado; Joaquin Miller, to the vast plains and Sierras of the West; Edward Rowland Sill, to the new type of civilization developing on the California coast; Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey in their *Songs of Vagabondia* took it roaming all over the world. Most of this poetry was vigorous and easily understood. It had marked rhythms and was expressed in the idiom of the people it represented. Most of it was likable poetry; little of it was really great poetry.

### 5. *Eastern Writers Emphasizing Technique*

Meanwhile in the East a group of writers won recognition for the finish and technique of their work. The most important of them were magazine editors.

Thomas Bailey Aldrich, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, as a poet was typical of many others of his generation in the East — at his best delicately charming, but at his worst weakly insignificant. His most lasting work was in the short story, to which in "Marjorie Daw" he contributed both the surprise ending and the story told by letters. Both of these devices were widely imitated. He should also be recognized as the one who really introduced the American boy into our permanent fiction. His *Story of a Bad Boy* was written in 1859, a long time before Mark Twain's boy books. It was one of the few books written before the War between the States that really tried to look at people just as they are.

Frank Stockton, editor of *St. Nicholas Magazine*, went Aldrich one better on the surprise ending by making his most famous story, "The Lady or the Tiger?" end in a question which the reader must answer for himself. Stockton also perfected the "yarn," especially that of the seaman. He was rated as one of the foremost humorists of his day.

Henry Cuyler Bunner, editor of *Puck* (popular humor magazine of that day), could turn out a light, sparkling story of a suburban town or a summer resort with great skill. *Short Sixes* is his best-known collection of stories. Like Howells, he was an observer of the comfortable middle classes; but in the ordinary events of their lives he could always find the unusual spot to touch with humor or satire. He

was also the best writer of "society verse" between Oliver Wendell Holmes and the twentieth century (see page 697).

O. Henry (pen name for William Sydney Porter) carried the technique of the short story to its most amazing development. Week after week his stories appeared in the New York *World* and in magazines. Always the technique was the same — a chatty, familiar style with astounding polysyllables tossed nonchalantly in at any moment, digressions to throw the reader off his guard, and then a twist to jar him back to his senses in a concluding sentence of masterly unexpectedness. O. Henry was a distant relative of the local colorists, for one of his volumes is all about Texas (*The Heart of the West*) and another about New York City (*The Four Million*). His stories strike a deeper vein of sympathy with working people and the unfortunate than do those of Aldrich, Stockton, and Bunner. His prison experience (see page 117) had deepened his understanding of human problems. Yet he did not show the resentment and revolt of the writers to be discussed in the next section. Poignant as his stories might be beneath the surface, there was usually the mask of comedy to meet the first view of the reader.

### 6. *The Revolt of the Younger Realists*

Until about 1890 American literary realism had been content to tell the truth as it appeared. Howells faithfully transcribed the commonplace in life around him. The local colorists recorded the interesting things about each section of the country. Mark Twain wrote humorously of the everyday life of the Far West and the Mississippi Valley. Most of the literature of the seventies and eighties was pleasant reading. On the whole one was not moved profoundly and seldom shocked (except by Whitman). But in the nineties a new note was struck. Instead of merely accepting what they observed, writers began to resent it and protest against it. Realism began to see that there were things wrong with the structure of American social life. In the preceding chapter you have found some of the reasons for this discontent — the rise of big business, the crowded conditions of the slums, the tyranny of the machine, the extremes of wealth and poverty. Since 1890 writers have not minced words in telling of what they have seen.

**Garland and the Middle Border.** One of the first of these voices came from the farm. Hamlin Garland, returning from his

studies in Boston, was shocked to see how hard his mother had to work to keep body and soul together on her little farm. He described his feelings thus:

This was an epoch-making experience for me, for my three years in Boston had given me perspective on the life of the prairie farmer. I perceived with new vision the loneliness and drudgery of the farmers' wives. All across northwestern Iowa and up through central Dakota I brooded darkly over the problem presented, and this bitter mood was deepened by the condition in which I found my mother on a treeless farm just above Ordway. It was in this mood of resentment that I began to write (immediately after returning to Boston) the stories which later made up the first volume of *Main-Traveled Roads*.

Garland's resentment of 1891, when this book was published, melted in time and is far less evident in his series of Middle Border autobiographies begun in 1917. These cover the experiences of his family on farms in Iowa, Dakota, and Wisconsin and are invaluable records of an earlier day. Garland is to be remembered, however, as the first one to present the grimmer face of realism, and the first real farmer to portray farm life in our fiction.

Stephen Crane revolted against social conditions, against traditional codes of morality, and against literary formalities. Out of his revolt came uncompromisingly realistic writing which has taught succeeding writers to look for the dark as well as the bright side of the picture. In 1891 he wrote a novel, *Maggie*, portraying a girl of the slums of a big city. His most famous novel was *The Red Badge of Courage* (1895), the vivid story of a young recruit in the War between the States, emphasizing the mental and emotional tortures of a youth confronted with war's brutalities. "The Open Boat," a story of shipwreck based on his own experiences, has been called by H. G. Wells "the finest short story in the English language." Crane's poems were short, incisive, ironic, often bitter, and written in a formless kind of free verse. They are more appreciated today than at the time of their writing.

Ambrose Bierce stands with Crane in first portraying the horrors of war. His collection of stories *In the Midst of Life* preceded Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* by one year. In both these books war was portrayed as it never had been before in our fiction, but as it has many times since — with its horrors and its brutalities put foremost, instead of its glories and its triumphs. Bierce, unlike Crane, was speaking from firsthand experience; for he went through the war

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as a soldier, ending with the rank of major. Crane was born after the close of the war and depended on his imagination, of course, for the effectiveness of his pictures

Edwin Markham, in 1899, fired a poetic "shot heard round the world" in "The Man with the Hoe" (see page 604). Wide reprinting of this poem brought his challenge before the whole nation. The responsibility of all classes for the miserable existence of its lowest members was never more eloquently stated. Fifty years earlier, humanitarian interests had concentrated on freeing the slaves. Now it was found that not all problems had been solved with the Emancipation Proclamation. Someone has called this poem "the battle cry of the next thousand years." It was the first widely circulated expression in our literature of what we today call "social consciousness."

Frank Norris took as his theme "the epic of the wheat" in the form of a trilogy of novels. The first book, *The Octopus* (1901), was a novel of grain growing, showing how the railroads crushed and controlled the lives of those who raised the wheat (see page 1120). The second, *The Pit* (1903), was a story of the distribution of the wheat through the Chicago grain market, showing how trade and speculation enslaved men's lives. The third book, which was to have been called *The Wolf* and was to have told how the wheat was brought to Europe to relieve a famine, was never written. Norris had great power of vivid portrayal, and his early death was a real loss to our literature.

Jack London, prolific writer, includes in his wide range of books some of the characteristics of these other men and many more of his own. Son of a frontier trapper and scout, he spent a roving and often indigent youth. As an oyster pirate, common sailor, tramp, and gold seeker in Alaska, he had had experiences enough with mankind on its lowest economic and cultural levels. When at last he determined to write, as described in his autobiographical *Martin Eden*, it was natural that he should become the portrayer and defender of the working classes; but beyond that he is also the voice of the wilderness and of elemental nature in all its forms. His frankness and his rapid, vivid style made him a great influence in his day. The very titles of his best-known books suggest the qualities for which he is remembered: *The Call of the Wild* (a glorious animal novel), *The Sea Wolf*, *White Fang*, and *The Cruise of the Snark*

Realism intensifies into naturalism. Jack London and two young writers whose later work places them in the period of the modern world have gone from realism into naturalism. This means that they write about the darker sides of life, describe man as the victim of

a hostile environment and the prey of his own instincts. Theodore Dreiser caused a flurry with *Sister Carrie* in 1900, and in 1906 Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* created a furor with its exposure of atrocious conditions in the stockyards. The ground was broken for plain-spoken literature, and the World War planted a good crop of the seeds of disillusionment to grow up in today's world.

### 7. *The Last Stand of the Romanticists*

While the shock troops of a newer realism were going into action, there was still a great body of persons eager to read the newest romance. As the frontier afforded less and less of the romance of contemporary adventure, writers began to turn to the distant past; and the historical novel bloomed into full flower. In 1880 General Lew Wallace had written the first great American historical novel based on an ancient European background. This was *Ben Hur*, which, with the added fame of stage plays and moving pictures, has become one of the classics of our literature. In the next two decades the historical novel gathered momentum, so that in the few years on either side of 1900 dozens of such tales were poured forth upon a willing public. Most of the authors could produce readable but not great books. They "had their day and ceased to be" as forces in fiction, though many of them are still read by lovers of romance and occasionally find resurrection in a movie. The man who stands out among them, largely for the quantity rather than for any marked superiority, is Winston Churchill (1871- ). His great idea of picturing the various stages of American history produced *Richard Carvel* about the Revolutionary War, *The Crisis* on the War between the States, *The Crossing* on the westward movement, and *Coniston* on the political boss.

Probably the most artistic and enduring piece that came out of the historical ferment was a novelette, *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1900), by Booth Tarkington. It is one of those things in American literature no one should miss reading. Tarkington was definitely a romanticist through several of his early novels until he struck his rich vein—the picturing of adolescents. But that story belongs to our present period.

### SUMMARY

After 1870 the two marked changes in our literature were: first, the great West became vocal, and literature spread across the entire con-

tinient instead of being confined to the eastern seaboard; second, the mood and tone gradually changed from romantic to realistic. William Dean Howells, the pronounced apostle of realism, exerted a marked influence through both the quality and quantity of his writings. Henry James employed realistic methods in his novels; he emphasized international situations and careful analysis of character. Mark Twain was the first great American author who was indisputably Western. He wrote two of the great "boys' " books of all time and several books of autobiographical content, all with a vein of individual humor. Bret Harte's picture of the West tended to be more theatrical and less genuine than Mark Twain's, but attained widespread popularity and set the style for the "local colorists" who flooded the country with regional literature. Poetry, too, was written in the West as well as the East, but tended to be lighter and less significant than that of the earlier period. In general, triviality and emphasis on technique rather than serious subject matter marked both poetry and prose toward the end of the century.

However, in the 1890's and early 1900's several revolting spirits — such as Hamlin Garland, Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, and Edwin Markham — introduced a sterner strain; they faced the facts of war and injustice and so made the beginnings of a literature of social protest. London, Dreiser, and Upton Sinclair carried realism over into a grim naturalism. At the same time O. Henry was immensely popular with his highly individual technique in the short story, and dozens of writers were pleasing the public with historical fiction of a romantic turn. There was no question, however, but that the newer and stronger tendency in literature was definitely realistic.

#### IN THIS VOLUME

|                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain)     | Edward Rowland Sill  |
| Selection from <i>Mark Twain's</i> | Two poems (587-89)   |
| <i>Autobiography</i> (403)         | James Whitcomb Riley |
| Selection from <i>Life on the</i>  | Two poems (593-95)   |
| <i>Mississippi</i> (1011)          | Eugene Field         |
| Bret Harte                         | Two poems (596-98)   |
| "The Outcasts of Poker             | Joaquin Miller       |
| Flat," a story (103)               | Two poems (590-92)   |
| "Plain Language from Truth-        | Bliss Carman         |
| ful James," a poem (695)           | Two poems (599-600)  |
| Joel Chandler Harris               | Richard Hovey        |
| "The Awful Fate of Mr              | Two poems (601-02)   |
| Wolf," a folk story (114)          |                      |



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|--|---|
| Thomas Bailey Aldrich  | Edwin Markham                               |
| "A Struggle for Life," a story<br>(93)                           | Three poems (604-08)                        |
| Henry Cuyler Bunner  | Frank Norris                                |
| "Candor," a poem (697)   | Selection from <i>The Octopus</i><br>(1120) |
| O. Henry   | Jack London                                 |
| "The Whirligig of Life," a<br>story (118)                        | "To Build a Fire," a story<br>(124)         |
| Hamlin Garland   |   |
| Selection from <i>A Son of the</i><br><i>Middle Border</i> (411) |   |

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Explain how the War between the States, westward expansion, and industrial development all tended to destroy romanticism. Explain the difference between romanticism and realism.

2. How did the realism of Howells differ from that of James? Which writer is more distinctly American? Which is more difficult to understand? Why?

3. Justify naming Mark Twain as the first great writer of the West. This will involve also a definition of that movable term "West." How does his humor differ from that of Holmes? of Lowell? List his important books under headings that will show their different types.

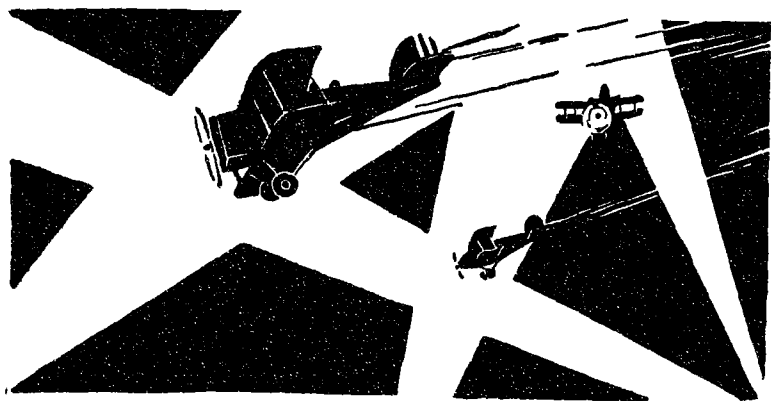
4. Explain what is meant by "local color." Using an outline map of the United States, point out the main sections of the country which have had, or still have, marked individuality. For each of these sections list a number of specific items which would contribute to a picture of that section and would not be characteristic of other sections. Place the names of important local-color writers in their appropriate sections.

5. From section 4 show how poetry was shifting geographically, in subject matter and in poetic style, illustrating your points by naming and characterizing specific poets.

6. How did the authors of the East differ from those of the West? What innovations were introduced in short-story technique during the late nineteenth century and the early twentieth? Name authors responsible for these.

7. Against how many different things can you find revolt taking place in the nineties? Opposite each, name the authors with their particular works illustrating that revolt. Are any of these revolts still in the air today? If so, which? Prove your points from current literature.

8. Why are "significant" writers not always "popular" writers? Why are writers who combine humor and sentiment likely to be popular? Name as many authors as you can, both past and present, whose popularity comes from the same combination of qualities.



## *Chapter IX*

### WORLD WAR AND MODERN PROBLEMS (1914 TO THE PRESENT)

#### *I. World War and Depression*

A QUARTER of a century has passed since the World War began in 1914. A new world came out of that war — our modern era — built upon what had preceded it, yet how amazingly different from the world of the nineteenth century in many of its routines, its ideas, its manners, and its mechanisms! Out of the varied, complex life of these twenty-five years we can here mention only a few significant events — banner headlines, we might say, topping the pages of our daily lives.

**The World War.** At the beginning of the twentieth century there were high hopes for an era of prolonged peace. For almost a hundred years, since the end of the Napoleonic Era, there had been no general European war. Although some observers viewed with foreboding the precarious balance of power in Europe and the rivalry of empires for colonies and markets, to most of the world's citizens these prophets seemed perversely pessimistic. Secure, convinced that they lived in an enlightened age, Europeans as well as Americans thought of a major war as an outgrown barbarism.

But in 1914 the assassination of an Austrian archduke in a Balkan capital proved the spark in the powder keg of power politics. And the war, when it came, in suddenness and fury was like none men had

ever seen before — a war embracing sea and air as well as land; a war that spread far beyond the European theater, involving Japan, China, Australia, South Africa, North and South America; a war felt directly in nearly every home in the civilized world.

Nineteen hundred and fourteen, the invasion of Belgium; 1915, the sinking of the *Lusitania*; 1916, Allied losses and defeats; 1917, renewal of the German submarine attacks on American shipping; loans, atrocity stories, propaganda. Month by month the tide swelled in the United States — sympathy with the Allies and indignation against the Central Powers. Finally, in April, 1917, the United States declared war, and American soldiers marched.

“A war to end war!” “A war to make the world safe for democracy!” The slogans of those frenzied days of 1917 and 1918 are tragically ironic to us now; but in recruiting stations, in Liberty Loan campaigns, in homes observing meatless and coalless days, they provided the emotional drive necessary for that concentration of a whole people’s energy which modern war demands.

**Woodrow Wilson and peace.** American supplies and men helped to turn the tide of battle, American prestige undermined the morale of the Central Powers, and the Fourteen Points submitted by President Wilson as a basis for peace negotiations tended to break the hold of the German and Austrian monarchies upon their peoples. And so the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, and the portentous Peace Conference called. In that conference the United States was represented by the President himself.

The hopes of hundreds of millions, of victor and vanquished alike, centered upon President Wilson in 1918, for he represented the world-wide aspiration that out of the havoc and anguish of the war should emerge a new order which somehow would solve the problems of nationalistic rivalries and insure peace and well-being to succeeding generations. The Covenant of the League of Nations, the proposal by Woodrow Wilson which embodied this aspiration, was adopted by the statesmen at the Versailles Conference. But the whole peace negotiations were carried on in a spirit of vindictiveness and intrigue which boded ill for such an idealistic venture, and many students of world politics agree that the jealousies and cynicism of rival states and statesmen doomed the League from the start.

**The Fabulous Twenties.** Then in the United States a reaction to five years of abnormal stress and concern with European affairs set in. Fearful of becoming embroiled in further European disputes, Americans repudiated Woodrow Wilson’s plan by refusing to enter the

League of Nations and by making a separate peace with the defeated nations. After the flurries of readjustment to a peace regime they settled down to having fun, making money, and minding their own business. "Back to normalcy" was the slogan that elected Warren G. Harding to the presidency in 1920, and after his election Americans embarked upon an era of expansion and profits which earned for that decade the title *The Fabulous Twenties*.

Disillusioned by the course of postwar events in Europe, rebellious against the restrictions of Prohibition, eager to share in the easy gains of speculation, Americans in the 1920's were a materialistic, pleasure-bent lot; and many were the sermons and admonitions of the more sober-thinking against flappers, joy riders, and the "younger generation." The farmers were perhaps the only large group who did not share to some extent in the feverish prosperity of the period, when factories and stores hummed and companies expanded by leaps and bounds. The stock market seemed the magic spring of profits; and not only professional and business classes but elevator boys, waitresses, and schoolboys gambled on the market, buying on margin with the most complete ignorance of the companies whose stocks they were purchasing, confident that the phenomenal rises which yielded phenomenal profits would continue indefinitely.

Here and there critics sounded warning against prosperity founded upon speculation; but the more popular beliefs were those expressed in the phrases "A permanent plateau of prosperity," "Two cars in every garage and two chickens in every pot." Through the years of the Coolidge administration, through 1928 and the election of Herbert Hoover, the wave of speculation on margin, installment buying, luxury living gained momentum.

**Depression.** And then in 1929 retribution arrived — retribution upon a world which had destroyed billions of dollars' worth of real goods in a world war, badly dislocated its credit system, and taken a joy ride through seven or eight fabulous years. A sudden crash in the stock market signaled our frantic descent from seemingly permanent prosperity to the depths of depression. Our whole economic system was so affected that not even yet have we Americans quite caught our breath from the terrific blows that smashed our illusions of permanent prosperity and security.

Bewildered and frightened, the people soon developed an understandable but fatal desire for cash. From Oregon to Florida bank depositors began to draw out what money remained to them, and daily bank after bank was forced to close its doors forever. Presi-

dent Roosevelt gave the country a breathing spell by declaring a bank holiday until the panic should subside. The bank holiday saved the country from complete financial collapse, but it did not stop the effects of depression. Soon nearly fifteen million men were unemployed, their meager savings gone. Most unsound or borderline industries were out of business. The bottom had been reached.

Obviously the government had to act with decision to stem swift currents of want and despair. "The forgotten man" became "the man of the hour," and many life preservers were thrown out to him labeled with alphabetic symbols — NRA, AAA, CCC, WPA, HOLC, and others. These New Deal measures were frankly experimental in time of crisis. Some have been discontinued; others, like the CCC, have proved of permanent value. Condemned or approved, as these agencies have variously been, they have been a significant part of the long, hard climb out of the depression.

**Foreign dictatorships.** But the economic dislocations and social maladjustments resulting from the World War were not limited to America alone. In an atmosphere of economic distress, war-born hates, and social unrest, in nation after nation democracy succumbed to dictators. These men developed personal, autocratic power by playing up racial hatreds and economic jealousies, by promising the masses relief from their distresses and revenge upon their foes, and by ruthlessly destroying all opposition. These political upheavals were destined to reshape the map of Europe and to affect the fate of nations throughout the world.

## 2. *Modern Problems*

Every age has its problems. Even a time of peace and prosperity like the twenties had them. But with the shadow of a great depression in the early thirties and of a general European war in the late thirties, our problems have become more acute and perplexing. American thought has become more serious. We are more concerned about economics, politics, and international relations than we used to be. It is not so easy to go selfishly and gaily on our way indifferent to human distress as it was in the twenties when we often assumed (falsely, as we know now) that everyone was prosperous and merry. "Social consciousness" has stamped itself upon our foreheads. It has colored our novels and dramas as well as the kind of magazine articles we read. This does not mean, however, that we have become a gloomy

and pessimistic nation. Problems are not just miseries. They are things as yet unsolved, things to work on and test our mettle on.

Here we can give only a sampling of the wide range of questions to which we do not yet know all the answers. Our problems fall into three main groups: (1) those of man's struggle against overpowering nature; (2) those of man's use of science and mechanics; (3) those of man's relationship to man.

**Man's struggle against nature.** Floods! Dust storms! These are two fronts on which nature has often seemed to be winning against feeble mankind. They are not, as would first appear, contradictory or mutually exclusive phenomena, but two phases of the same problem — that of soil conservation and that of the restoration of timber and grass. Seeking in the past the hasty way to wealth, we have used up vast natural resources, have destroyed nature's protective covering over the plains, and have allowed floods to devastate homes and crops. Although flood control is well understood by engineers, it is not yet an accomplished fact because of difficulties of appropriations and execution. These annual onslaughts of dust, wind, and water affect most directly the farmers, whose livelihood depends on the proper relationship between soil and water. Since about a third of our population live on farms and raise the food by which we live, their security and satisfaction becomes a major concern of the rest of us.

**Man's use of science and mechanics.** The United States leads the nations of the world in science and technology. Nowhere else are there so many laboratories, so many inventions, so much replacement of old methods by new and better ones. But such advances bring troublesome problems: what to do with the men whom laborsaving devices throw out of work, how to prevent the accidents which have so tremendously increased in number as the automobile designer and highway engineer have made it possible for us to travel at faster and ever-faster speeds, how to protect whole populations against the deadly war machines which inventors contrive. Mechanical progress is not a good in itself; whether it is a good or not depends on the uses to which it is put. We have the problem of using it for the benefit of mankind.

**Man's relationship to man.** This group of problems seems in many ways the hardest to untangle. Man is a rational animal and supposedly learns from experience; but he must apparently go through many more hard trials before he can acquire the good life of peace, prosperity, and security for all. Here within our own land we have

an intricate pattern of nationalities and races. Can we adjust ourselves to one another with tolerance, justice, and open-mindedness?

We have widely varying economic levels among the families of the nation. Can we assure adequate home conditions, education, and satisfaction in living to all our people?

The unemployment situation is still one of our major problems, for multitudes of young people are each year entering the arena and older people are extending their period of activity because of better health practices. Can we find work for all who need it? How can we provide for those outside the employable years?

This question leads into business and government. Shall government take a hand in business and industry by elaborate regulations and by itself becoming a large-scale employer to the great increase of the national debt? Or shall government allow business to pursue an unrestricted course which may stimulate private investment but at the same time enable selfish interests to sacrifice the common welfare if they choose?

This question leads into the whole problem of democracy. What difficulties and dangers beset a form of government which rests on the premise that the worth and the happiness of every individual counts for something, that the ultimate security and freedom of all rests on the vote and the voice of all citizens?

This question leads into our whole world relationship. What threat to our prized democracy is coming from the apparent efficiency of dictatorships in accomplishing speedy action? Are we in danger of sacrificing our freedom of speech, our right to make decisions only after thorough debate, our respect for differences of opinion — all of which lie at the core of the American way of life? How can world peace be established and how can mankind secure the essential liberty toward which we have been struggling for centuries?

Within the next decade you will become voters, workers, homemakers. The decade following that will see you in the prime of activity and responsibility. By the third decade your generation will have become the leaders, the determiners of our nation's policies. The time calls for a rededication of American youth to the principles of freedom and tolerance embodied in the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights, so that our great American heritage shall not be destroyed.

## SUMMARY

America entered the World War in 1917 to make the world safe for democracy, with Woodrow Wilson leading the crusade. But, disillusioned by the vicious Treaty of Versailles, we rejected the League of Nations and entered upon an era of unsound material prosperity which came to its inevitable conclusion in the worst depression America has ever known. Today we are faced with many weighty problems, which include the relationship of government and business, unemployment, the plight of the farmers, soil conservation, safety on our highways, and the preservation of democracy in a world dominated by ruthless dictatorships.

## I HAVE A RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH

by ALAN SEEGER (1888-1916)

Among soldiers, some, more gifted than their fellows — more sensitive perhaps, or at least more articulate — succeed in recording in prose or poetry the thrill and horror of their experience, and their personal reflections about the struggle which dominates their lives. Three such young men, who wrote memorable war poetry in the few brief months before they lost their lives in the World War, can well be mentioned together. The first is Rupert Brooke, gifted English poet; the second is a Canadian, John McCrae, author of "In Flanders Fields"; the third is the American poet Alan Seeger. Like many other foreign students who loved France, he enlisted in the Foreign Legion which saw almost continuous service throughout the long struggle. Alan Seeger died in action in July, 1916, fulfilling the prophecy expressed in this, his best-known poem

I have a rendezvous with Death  
At some disputed barricade,  
When Spring comes back with rustling shade  
And apple blossoms fill the air —  
I have a rendezvous with Death 5  
When Spring brings back blue days and fair.

It may be he shall take my hand  
And lead me into his dark land  
And close my eyes and quench my breath —  
It may be I shall pass him still. 10



I have a rendezvous with Death  
 On some scarred slope of battered hill,  
 When Spring comes round again this year  
 And the first meadow flowers appear.

God knows 'twere better to be deep 15  
 Pillowed in silk and scented down,  
 Where Love throbs out in blissful sleep,  
 Pulse nigh to pulse and breath to breath,  
 Where hushed awakenings are dear. . . .  
 But I've a rendezvous with Death 20  
 At midnight in some flaming town,  
 When Spring trips north again this year,  
 And I to my pledged word am true,  
 I shall not fail that rendezvous.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Be sure to know what the word "rendezvous" means.
2. Name the three places where Seeger thinks the rendezvous may have to be kept.
3. Why would it be particularly tragic for a poet to have to die in spring? Point out some proof of this from the poem.

#### A LEAGUE FOR PEACE

by WOODROW WILSON (1856-1924)

In his efforts to lead a war-torn world to peace, Woodrow Wilson made an address before the Senate of the United States on January 22, 1917, from which the following selection has been taken. He states here the ideals and principles which led him to propose and sponsor the League of Nations. How far the League failed in its function as conceived by President Wilson is attested by the fact that a new great European war began in 1939. Yet it is interesting and perhaps significant to observe that when European statesmen talk of adjustment and solutions to be made when this war, too, shall be ended, they suggest such possibilities as a federated Europe or a union of democracies. Perhaps history has not yet written finis to Wilson's plea for a league for peace.

THE EQUALITY of nations upon which peace must be founded if it is to last must be an equality of rights; the guarantees exchanged must neither recognize nor imply a difference between big nations and small, between those that are powerful and those that are weak. Right must be based upon the common strength, not upon the individual strength, of the nations upon whose concert peace will depend. Equality of territory or of resources there, of course, cannot be; nor any other sort of equality not gained in the ordinary peaceful and legitimate development of the peoples themselves. But no one asks or expects anything more than an equality of rights. Mankind is looking now for freedom of life, not for equipoises of power.

And there is a deeper thing involved than even equality of right among organized nations. No peace can last, or ought to last, which does not recognize and accept the principle that governments derive all their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that no right anywhere exists to hand peoples about from sovereignty to sovereignty as if they were property. I take it for granted, for instance, if I may venture upon a single example, that statesmen everywhere are agreed that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland; and that henceforth inviolable security of life, of ownership, and of industrial and social development should be guaranteed to all peoples who have lived hitherto under the power of governments devoted to a faith and purpose hostile to their own.

I speak of this, not because of any desire to exalt an abstract political principle which has always been held very dear by those who have sought to build up liberty in America, but for the same reason that I have spoken of the other conditions of peace which seem to me clearly indispensable — because I wish frankly to uncover realities. Any peace which does not recognize and accept this principle will inevitably be upset. It will not rest upon the affections or the convictions of mankind. The ferment of spirit of whole populations will fight subtly and constantly against it, and all the world will sympathize. The world can be at peace only if its life is stable, and there can be no stability where the will is in rebellion, where there is not tranquillity of spirit and a sense of justice, of freedom, and of right.

So far as practicable, moreover, every great people now struggling toward a full development of its resources and of its powers should be assured a direct outlet to the great highways of the sea. Where this cannot be done by the cession of territory, it can no doubt be done by the neutralization of direct rights of way under the general guarantee which will assure the peace itself. With a right comity

of arrangement no nation need be shut away from free access to the open paths of the world's commerce.

And the paths of the sea must alike in law and in fact be free. The freedom of the seas is the *sine qua non*<sup>1</sup> of peace, equality, and co-operation. No doubt a somewhat radical reconsideration of many of the rules of international practice hitherto thought to be established may be necessary in order to make the seas indeed free and common in practically all circumstances for the use of mankind, but the motive for such changes is convincing and compelling. There can be no trust or intimacy between the peoples of the world without them. The free, constant, unthreatened intercourse of nations is an essential part of the process of peace and of development. It need not be difficult either to define or to secure the freedom of the seas if the governments of the world sincerely desire to come to an agreement concerning it.

It is a problem closely connected with the limitation of naval armaments and the co-operation of the navies of the world in keeping the seas at once free and safe. And the question of limiting naval armaments opens the wider and perhaps more difficult question of the limitation of armies, and of all programs of military preparation. Difficult and delicate as these questions are, they must be faced with the utmost candor and decided in a spirit of real accommodation. If peace is to come with healing in its wings, and come to stay. Peace cannot be had without concession and sacrifice. There can be no sense of safety and equality among the nations if great preponderating armaments are henceforth to continue here and there to be built up and maintained. The statesmen of the world must plan for peace, and nations must adjust and accommodate their policy to it as they have planned for war and made ready for pitiless contest and rivalry. The question of armaments, whether on land or sea, is the most immediately and intensely practical question connected with the future fortunes of nations and of mankind.

I have spoken upon these great matters without reserve and with the utmost explicitness because it has seemed to me to be necessary if the world's yearning desire for peace was anywhere to find free voice and utterance. Perhaps I am the only person in high authority amongst all the peoples of the world who is at liberty to speak and hold nothing back. I am speaking as an individual, and yet I am speaking also, of course, as the responsible head of a great govern-

<sup>1</sup> *sine qua non*: Latin for "without which not"; that is, something absolutely necessary.

ment, and I feel confident that I have said what the people of the United States would wish me to say. May I not add that I hope and believe that I am in effect speaking for liberals and friends of humanity in every nation and of every program of liberty? I would fain believe that I am speaking for the silent mass of mankind everywhere who have as yet had no place or opportunity to speak their real hearts out concerning the death and ruin which they see has come already upon the persons and the homes they hold most dear.

And in holding out the expectation that the people and government of the United States will join the other civilizations of the world in guaranteeing the permanence of peace upon such terms as I have named, I speak with the greater boldness and confidence because it is clear to every man who can think that there is in this promise no breach in either our traditions or our policy as a nation, but a fulfillment, rather, of all that we have professed or striven for.

I am proposing, as it were, that the nations should with one accord adopt the doctrine of President Monroe<sup>1</sup> as the doctrine of the world; that no nation should seek to extend its polity over any other nation or people, but that every people should be left free to determine its own polity, its own way of development, unhindered, unthreatened, unafraid, the little along with the great and powerful.

I am proposing that all nations henceforth avoid entangling alliances<sup>2</sup> which would draw them into competitions of power, catch them in a net of intrigue and selfish rivalry, and disturb their own affairs with influences intruded from without. There is no entangling alliance in a concert of power. When all unite to act in the same sense and with the same purpose, all act in the common interest and are free to live their own lives under a common protection.

I am proposing government by the consent of the governed; that freedom of the seas which in international conference after conference representatives of the United States have urged with the eloquence of those who are the convinced disciples of liberty; and that moderation of armaments which makes of armies and navies a power for order merely, not an instrument of aggression or of selfish violence.

These are American principles, American policies. We could stand for no others. And they are also the principles and policies of forward-

<sup>1</sup> doctrine . . . Monroe: In 1823 President Monroe stated that the United States would not tolerate any attempt of European countries to do further colonization, or to oppress or control in any other manner the destiny of the independent governments of the Western Hemisphere. <sup>2</sup> entangling alliances: The phrase had been first used by Thomas Jefferson in his "Inaugural Address," but the idea, of course, goes back to Washington's "Farewell Address."

looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. How was the principle of self-determination by national groups, here set forth by Wilson, used by Hitler in the Czechoslovakian crisis of 1938? What subsequent events proved that he was using this argument cynically, without belief in its validity?

2. Find the sentence in which Wilson refers to Poland. What events make this sentence ironic today?

3. Wilson discusses the question of freedom of the seas. After the war began in 1939, what restrictions were made upon freedom of the seas?

4. What are the arguments advanced now for or against federating or unifying Europe? What specific proposals have been made?

5. Vocabulary: *equipoises*, *autonomous*, *inviolable*, *comity*.

### For Your Vocabulary

6. Among the menaces to peace that Wilson criticizes are "great *preponderating* armaments" (page 1162). *Preponderating* means outweighing, and is closely related to our familiar words *ponder* and *ponderous*. All three words have lost the original strict idea of physical weight and gained new significance. *Ponder* means to weigh in the sense of thinking a thing over thoroughly and carefully. *Ponderous* means heavy in ways noted by the mind rather than by the scales, as a style or manner is *ponderous*. *Preponderating* and the more frequently used *preponderant* are used of various kinds of force and power. An argument may be *preponderating*, outweighing all opposition. *Preponderant* is used often of numbers, as in remarking that the state of New York has a *preponderant* urban population, or that Maine is *preponderantly* Republican. Why did Robinson call Bewick Finzer's dreams of wealth *imponderable* (page 612)?

### For Ambitious Students

7. Look up and report to the class the history of the various partitions of Poland, including the recent one of 1939.

8. Read Clarence Streit's *Union Now* and discuss his plan for a federal union in comparison with the earlier plan of the League of Nations.

## THE DOORBELL RANG: 1932

by LOUIS ADAMIC (1899- )

This selection is a piece of journalistic writing. But it fulfills one of the great functions of all literature — it dramatizes a complex subject, translating it into human terms we can understand. In his description of an encounter with two begging children, Louis Adamic gives us a picture to suggest what depression meant, and means, to millions of families.

Of the young journalists who seek to interpret contemporary America, Louis Adamic stands well at the fore. Born in what is now Yugoslavia, he came to the United States at the age of fourteen and for several years worked and roamed all over the country. By 1932 he had earned sufficient reputation as a writer to be awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship with which to visit his native country. *The Native's Return* is the fascinating account of this visit to the Old World. But Louis Adamic is an American citizen and a devout one, so much so that he calls the book from which this chapter is taken *My America*. (See page 362 for a review of this book.)

STELLA and I were living at her mother's.

At about a quarter to eight one cold morning in mid-January, 1932, while we were at breakfast, the doorbell rang. Thinking it was the postman, I did not press the button which would open the outside door but, as usual, went out to get the mail.

Instead of the postman, however, I was confronted by two children: a girl, as we learned afterward, of ten and a boy of eight. Not very adequate for the season and weather, their clothing was patched but clean. They carried schoolbooks.

"Excuse me, Mister," said the girl in a voice that sounded older than she looked, "but we have no eats in our house and my mother she said I should take my brother before we go to school and ring a doorbell in some house" — she swallowed heavily and took a deep breath — "and ask you to give us something to eat."

"Come in," I said, with a strange feeling. I had previously heard of children ringing doorbells in the Bronx, in Harlem, and in Brooklyn, but had scarcely believed it, though one part of my mind knew it was true.

The children were given food. The girl ate slowly; the boy quickly, greedily. He looked at no one and made no reply even when Stella or her mother asked him if he wanted more. When he got more food, he bolted it down rapidly.

The girl, however, answered every question directly, thoroughly,

thoughtfully. Some of the information she volunteered. In fact, she was almost loquacious, as though eager to explain everything, to be understood, or eager just to talk. There was an unnatural, almost unreal, air about her. Her personality was vivid but, somehow, askew. Her curious, unchildlike stare remained fixed on the face of the person to whom she spoke.

When her brother did not answer, she explained his silence. "He ate a banana yesterday afternoon; but it wasn't ripe enough or something, and it made him sick, and he didn't eat anything since. He's always like this when he's hungry and we gotta ring doorbells."

Twisting angrily in his chair, the boy gave a little grunt.

"Do you often ring doorbells?" the girl was asked.

"When we have no eats at home." She drank her milk slowly.

"What made you ring our bell?"

"I don't know; I just did."

After a while I asked her, "What is your name?"

"Mary S——." She spelled her last name. "My brother is Jimmie S——."

The boy twisted in his chair again, self-consciously.

I studied the girl. She was tiny for her age, no doubt underweight, but appeared more an adult who had shrunk than a growing child. She was keen and knew more of the immediate world in which she found herself than people four times her age had known of the world they were living in before 1930. She told us where they — her mother, her brother, and she lived: in a poor neighborhood five blocks from us. "We used to live on the fourth floor upstairs, and we had three rooms and a kitchen and bath; now we have only one room downstairs, in back."

"Why did you move downstairs?"

The boy winced.

"My father," answered his sister simply, "he lost his job when the panic came. That was two years ago. I was eight and Jimmie was six. My father he tried to get work; but he couldn't, the depression was so bad. But he called it the panic."

We were all startled by her vocabulary — "panic," "depression." She was entirely at ease.

"What kind of work did your father do?" I asked.

"Painter and paper hanger. Before things got so bad, he always had jobs when his work was in season, and he was good to us — my mother says so, too. Then, after he couldn't get any more jobs, he got mean and he yelled at my mother. He couldn't sleep nights and he

walked up and down and talked; sometimes he hollered, and we couldn't sleep, either."

"Was he a union man?"

"No, he didn't belong to no union. He said unions was rackets."

Shocked, curious, fascinated, I could not help asking her further questions — especially since she did not mind them.

"What did your father holler about?"

"He called my mother bad names." The girl hesitated a moment. Her brother winced again. "He was angry because my mother, before she married him, she was in love with another man and almost married him. But my mother she says it wasn't my father's fault he acted mean like he did. He was mean because he had no job and we had no money."

"Where is your father now?"

"We don't know. He went away four months ago, right after Labor Day, and he never came back; so we had to move downstairs. The landlord didn't want to throw us out, so he told my mother to move in downstairs."

Between sips from her milk glass, Mary talked on. Her mother did housework when she found some to do; however, earned very little that way. A charity organization had been giving her two dollars and eighty-five cents a week, but lately it had stopped — Mary did not know why. Her mother had applied to the Home Relief, but had not yet received anything from that source.

The boy, who had stopped eating, suddenly turned to his sister and muttered, "You talk too much! I told you not to talk."

The girl said nothing. She sat quietly. There was an awkward pause.

I said, "It's really our fault, Jimmie; we're asking too many questions."

"Yeah," he agreed.

My mother-in-law had wrapped up a lunch for them.

"Well, you better go to school, now," said Stella, "or you may be late."

"I think we're late already," said the girl, "but we was late one time before when we had to get breakfast outside like this; but I told Jimmie's teacher and mine why, and the teachers they sent us down to the principal and the principal he didn't say anything."

"Come again," said my mother-in-law, on the verge of tears.

I asked what school they attended and for their teachers' names and their mother's house number. She promptly gave me all the informa-



tion and thanked us for the breakfast and the lunch. The boy said nothing. And they went.

I went to the school and learned from the girl's teacher that, while such cases were not yet numerous in that neighborhood, they were increasing. Some children rang doorbells; others brought slips of paper from their mothers, asking teachers to please "get the school" to provide shoes for them; they were unable to do so themselves. The school had no funds for such emergencies, so some of the teachers bought shoes for these pupils out of their own pockets.

I visited Mrs. S—— in her crowded single-room dwelling. She was evidently American-born of immigrant parents, but I hesitated asking her of what nationality; it did not matter, anyhow. She was about thirty, neat, a white iciness on her face. She wept when I gave her a few dollars. I found it hard to talk with her, especially after I learned that she believed in the imminent Second Coming. She gave me a leaflet entitled *The Kingdom of Heaven Is at Hand*. The cult of which she was a member expected the millennium in 1933.

I went to the local Home Relief office, where one of the social workers knew my name. She took up "the case" at once and two or three days later, when I telephoned, I was informed that Mrs. S—— had received a food order.

Little Mary fascinated me more and more, as I thought of her. She was, apparently, a child of the depression. The last two years had done a great deal to her, physically and otherwise. Why did she talk so much? Did she, too, believe in the Second Coming? Whenever the bell rang early in the morning, I went out, hoping it might be she and her sullen brother; but they never came again.

About ten days later Stella and I were out walking in the afternoon, and we decided to visit Mrs. S—— to see how she and the children were getting along. But we were informed that they had moved two days ago. Our informant was the landlord, who thought that Mrs. S—— had thrown in her lot with the Second Coming cult, who were banding together in close quarters, living on relief, waiting for the Kingdom of Heaven to include the earth.

This is all I can tell of the S——es.

But our brief contact with them led me to hire myself out for a month to the Home Relief as an assistant case worker, visiting the homes of the jobless, studying the depression's effects on family life. I thought I might publish an article on the subject, but did not. My experiences and observations during that month — February, 1932 — had affected me so that I could not write of them objectively at the time; then I received the Guggenheim award and went to Europe.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Does Mr. Adamic find any individual responsible for the wretchedness of the S——es? Note how many evidences he discovered of kindness and good will.
2. By referring to the characters of this family tragedy, show that different persons react differently to misfortune.

*For Your Vocabulary*

3. The *millennium* expected by Mrs. S—— and her cult (page 1168) is the thousand years when Christ is to reign on earth, and therefore a state of general righteousness and happiness. In its wider meaning, the *millennium* is a remote and unattainable state of well-being and happiness. You will find William Allen White warning American youth of the hard work to be done before America attains a state of *millennial* beauty (page 1199). Another popular term for an ideal state is *Utopia*, originally the name of an imaginary perfect country described by Sir Thomas More in 1516. The word *Utopia* means "nowhere." Schemes that are seriously proposed and nobly intended but impractical are called *Utopian*. One can plan for a *Utopia*; one can only hope for the *millennium*.

*For Ambitious Students*

4. Relate some experience which gave you a glimpse of genuine poverty.
5. How many unemployed are there in the United States today? What are some of the factors that make unemployment a very complex problem?
6. Look up the beginnings of widespread public relief resulting from the depression. Compare the number on relief in 1932 with that of the present. Discuss relief conditions in your own community.

THE PARADOX OF POVERTY  
AND PLENTY

by WALTER LIPPMANN (1889— )

Among modern writers on politics and current problems, Walter Lippmann occupies a distinguished position. The magazines and newspapers to which he has been a regular contributor include the *New Republic*, the *New York World*, and the *New York Herald Tribune*; and today his articles, published by a large newspaper syndicate, are of considerable importance in forming public opinion on many economic and political questions. In the following article Mr. Lippmann discusses the bewildering fact that today millions of Americans are living in abject poverty despite

the equally obvious fact that we Americans are today capable of producing an abundance of food, clothing, and all the other necessities — and even luxuries — of life.

Can this problem be solved by the same rugged individualism which produced our abundance? Or must we submit to more and more government control in order to secure the distribution of purchasing power necessary to keep the wheels of industry turning? Mr. Lippmann is not discouraged by the problem; he accepts it as an inspiring challenge to the adventurous spirit of modern man.

EVERYONE is aware of the paradox at the heart of all the present-day suffering — the sensational and the intolerable paradox of want in the midst of abundance, of poverty in the midst of plenty. This is the first great economic depression in which every thinking person has been conscious of such a paradox.

It is often said that this depression is not unlike the great depressions after 1837 and 1873. There are, indeed, many common elements; and if our knowledge of these other crises were more reliable than it is, we should probably have more practical wisdom at hand for meeting our problem. But in the mentality of the people there is a profound difference between this crisis and all its predecessors. This is the first time when it is altogether evident that man's power to produce wealth had reached a point when it is clearly unnecessary that millions in a country like the United States should be in want. In all previous crises there was some doubt as to whether the wealth of the nation was sufficient. That doubt no longer exists.

Man has invented and organized the power to produce wealth on a scale which allows us to say that the most ancient of human problems — the problem of scarcity — has been solved. It has not been solved in all parts of the globe. It has not been solved in China or in India and not yet, I think, in Russia. There men are still under the dominion of scarcity; the wealth, no matter how fairly it may be distributed, does not exist, to liberate the peoples from the menace of want. There the problem is still the ancient problem — the problem of scarcity, of famine due to the shortage of food and other goods.

But in our Western world, and above all in the United States, this problem is solved. Not only do we know how to produce all the wealth needed for a decent standard of life for everybody, we actually do produce it in great abundance.

It has taken about three hundred years to arrive at the point where we can definitely say that the problem of scarcity is solved. It has required the development of modern science, the overthrow of feudal-

ism, the liberation of personal energies through the democratic destruction of caste, and the widespread popularization of knowledge to accomplish the result. But it has been done. It is in any large perspective a great achievement.

We who stand at the culmination of this epoch can see today that in order to reap the results of this achievement, in order to translate the power we possess into a secure and ordered civilization, we have to do something which is extremely difficult. We have to tamper with the motives which made the achievement possible. For if we are realistic we must acknowledge that the moving force behind the stupendous material work of the nineteenth century was the acquisitive instinct stimulated to tremendous energy by the prospect of enormous personal profits and personal power. The supreme social problem of the twentieth century, and perhaps for a longer time than that, is to find energies as powerful and as persistent as the acquisitive and the competitive which are disinterested and co-operative in their effect.

If I read correctly the recent experience of Russia, it is being demonstrated there how difficult it is to solve that problem. For the Russian system starts with the premise that the acquisitive motive shall be outlawed. But the Russian experience seems to show, not only that the acquisitive motive is difficult to suppress, but that without it the energies of men to produce wealth are at present insufficient. That is why the Russians, when they find the output of wealth insufficient, are compelled, temporarily at least, to mitigate their pure doctrine and make concessions to private acquisitiveness.

I mention this, not by way of criticism, but because it seems to me to show the essential difficulty met by men who are making the most radical experiment with a problem which confronts all mankind. Their experiment shows thus far, it seems to me, that a technology for the production of wealth brought into being under the stimulus of strong acquisitiveness will not easily be maintained and mastered by disinterested and co-operative motives alone.

It seems probable, therefore — indeed, I think we may say it is certain — that as it took several centuries to solve the problem of scarcity so it will take long generations to solve what we may call the problem of the management of plenty. The solution of that problem depends upon changes in human motives as great as those which distinguish a feudal peasant from the modern businessman. I do not say this in the spirit of those who tell us that nothing is possible because human nature is unchangeable. Human nature is changeable in the sense that the informed idealist has in mind. The change that has

come over human nature in the West since the fifteenth century has made possible the capitalist system. The modern businessman is the descendant of peasants, and if his human nature is unchanged from that of his ancestors, the motives which actuate him and the energies which he shows are at least a radical rearrangement and displacement of the ancient pattern. If the descendants of the modern businessman are to operate a social order in which personal initiative is to be combined with public responsibility, his motives will have to change as radically in the next centuries as they have in the past.

We are not, however, able to wait until human motives have been transformed. The pressure of events compels us to make experiments in the management of human affairs, for which, in fact, we lack adequate human material. We do not have the wisdom and disinterestedness to manage with any assurance the volume of credit which determines the rhythm of economic enterprise. We do not have the wisdom and disinterestedness to make the world secure against war. We do not have the wisdom and disinterestedness to plan and arrange the growth of our cities or the future of agriculture or the balance between agriculture and industry. Nevertheless, we have to attempt all these things, and many more besides, for which we are unprepared and inadequate. For the world in which we live, the world which our achievement in production has created, is a world which is so complicated, so dependent upon agreements and upon foresight that a policy of *laissez faire*<sup>1</sup> has become utterly impossible. We have to attempt the management of it, though we know so little how to manage it. We have to learn by trial and error, since the whole truth is not revealed to us and we cannot spin it *a priori*<sup>2</sup> out of our minds.

Therefore, the Ages of Discovery are not over. We are entering a new one in which the problems are as fascinating and the issues as momentous as any with which man has dealt. The voyage of Columbus opened up a new world to the European spirit, and within those widened horizons men accomplished miracles of invention and human organization. The solution of the problem of scarcity is a discovery like that of Columbus. It has opened a new world in which the human spirit can and will expand with hopes and energies and invincible ambitions for a better order of life than men have ever known before.

<sup>1</sup> *laissez faire*: French for "let alone." In economics it means unrestricted competition. <sup>2</sup> *a priori*: from cause to effect. The Latin means literally "from what is before."

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the problem of scarcity? To what human motive does Mr. Lippmann attribute the solution of this problem?
2. What is the problem now confronting the Western world? What motives will have to be developed to solve this problem? What must we do while these motives are being developed?
3. Name some of the differences in human motives between a feudal peasant and a modern businessman, between a modern businessman and a businessman in a system of successful "management of plenty."
4. In what ways do you believe human nature can, and cannot, be changed?

*For Your Vocabulary*

5. To get the full force of the opening statements in this article, you must know exactly what a *paradox* is — a statement or situation containing apparent contradictions. Many popular riddles are built on *paradoxes*; for example, "The more it dries, the wetter it gets. What is it?"<sup>1</sup> A *paradoxical* statement is often a mere play on words, but a *paradoxical* situation usually displays striking maladjustments, as in Lippmann's *paradox* of poverty in the midst of plenty. Another word in this essay much used in discussion of social and political theories is *premise* (page 1171), which means a statement regarded as true and made the basis of other statements or beliefs. Find the *premise* the author says is the basis of Russian political thinking. What are some of the *premises* on which our American thinking is based?

<sup>1</sup> A towel.

## CREVASSE

by LYLE SAXON (1891— )

Along the thousands of miles of the mighty Mississippi and its tributaries, and in hundreds of other valleys and gulleys, north, south, east, and west, farmers and townspeople, Negroes and whites, have learned to fear the threat of rising water, the devastation of actual flood.

Flood control is a national problem of the first magnitude. By telling the story of one family and one plantation in floodtime, Mr. Saxon enables us in the following selected passages from *Father Mississippi* to see a great social problem graphically in terms of its effect on human beings.

THERE WAS a time of feverish activity on the plantation; the river was lapping at the top of the levee. Men in Louisiana, men in Mississippi, men in Arkansas, were worried, sleepless. The levees were holding; the levees must hold; it was inconceivable that they should break. All labor in the fields had stopped and all the Negroes were working on the levee, strengthening the weak places, building it higher — "topping," they called it.

All day long and far into the night the men toiled. From the gallery of the big house we could see lanterns bobbing along the levee top. No longer were cows and horses permitted to roam upon the grass-grown slope; no longer did men ride horses upon the high ridge. Instead, the white men took turns acting as levee guards. Every foot before the plantation was guarded; and where our line of guards ended, the guards of the plantations adjoining took up the work.

Long lines of Negroes with wheelbarrows passed. There was a great hole in the sugar-cane field south of the house, near the road; it was from this hole that the earth was taken to build the levees higher. Far into the night we could hear the Negroes singing or "hallooing" to each other. They made a game of the hard work and did not seem to mind the heavily loaded barrows of earth which they trundled up the steep slope of the levee. Boards had been laid, end to end, so the barrows would roll easily and so the slope of the levee would not be worn away.

The white men were haggard, unshaven, worried. Meals were served at odd hours to the guards. There were strange men, wearing mudstained clothes, at every meal. The coffeepot rarely left the stove nowadays; and it was no unusual sight to see a Negro man riding on horseback, carrying a coffeepot in one hand, while a string of tin cups jangled over his shoulder. He was taking hot coffee to the men on the levee.

The women at the plantation house were worried too. The men of the family were insisting that the women go aboard a steamboat and remain in the town of Baton Rouge until the water receded; but the women would not hear of it. "What? Leave everything that we have in the world? The idea! And what would you do without us?"

They tried to make a joke of it, but even the children knew the difference between this kind of jest and the other kind. This was something else altogether, like whistling in the dark to keep up your courage when you passed a graveyard at night.

The Negroes, however, did not seem disturbed at all. They played about as usual, and laughter rose in the evenings from the plantation

"street" as it did in other times. But at intervals all day long the colored women would pass through the "front yard" carrying dinner buckets to the black men who labored on the levees. In ordinary times passing through the "front yard" was forbidden; but this was an unusual time. Everything was different.

"The highest water in the history of the river. The levee is bound to break somewhere. It's bound to . . . and if it doesn't, the water will be running over the top." Nothing else was discussed. Nothing else mattered. The children had no lessons. We were forbidden to go outside of the front yard. And we must be within calling distance always. We promised this.

All day long in the burning sun the men toiled, building up the levee, putting in "cribbing" in the weak places, and "topping" the whole levee as far as eye could reach north and south. "Topping" consisted of building a sort of wooden fence on the river side of the levee top. Posts were driven three feet into the earth of the levee and a board fence put against them; and against this "topping" were piled "sandbags" — gunny sacks filled with earth. Already the water was pounding against this "topping," and the waves from passing steamboats washed over the top and trickled down among the clover and grass on the land side of the levee.

The crest of the flood would reach us within a day or two; if we could withstand that, we were safe. "We'll pull through the next few days some way or other." Phrases like this were repeated over and over, as though to give us strength.

A dozen flat-bottomed rowboats lay in the dust of the plantation "street," each boat tied securely to a fence post. "So, if the worst comes to the worst." Negro women went back and forth, filling the boats with water. One of my uncles made an inspection of the boats every day.

Night. The grown folks were seated around the dining-room table. The three candles burned under their glass shades; but little black Lawrence had been sent to bed, and the children had been excused from the table. I had climbed up on a chair in order to look on the top shelf of the big bookcase which stood against the wall opposite the fireplace. I stood fingering the books, only half listening to what was said by the others:

". . . but, after all, my dear, we might as well face the fact that every minute may be our last one here. I'd feel safer if you and Mary joined the rest of the family in Baton Rouge."



It was my uncle's voice, very quiet, very earnest. My mother, resting her elbow on the tablecloth and shading her eyes from the candlelight, did not answer for a moment. Then she said, "I'd rather stay. I know that Mary feels the same way about it. We're not in actual danger. There's always the levee. And I would be miserable in town. I would feel that I had deserted when you needed me most. Mary and I can at least see that you are comfortable. And, besides, I want to stay."

My uncle leaned over and patted my mother on the shoulder. "If that's the way you feel," he said. Then he broke off, only half persuaded. "But what about —" and he made a gesture toward the hall. They had both forgotten that I was still in the dining room. But I knew that they were speaking of me.

I got down from the chair and came up to the table, standing beside my Uncle Paul's chair. "Why do you want us to go away?"

My feelings were hurt. It seemed terrible to think of being sent away from the plantation, although I realized that there was some unknown danger. I could not realize the actual horror of a crevasse.

My uncle put his arm around my shoulder.

"Sonny," he said, "you've got to remember that you're only a little boy. Something might happen to you. A crevasse is no place for women and children." . . .

My throat tightened, but I fought down the desire to cry. If I cried, I should give proof to his words that I was a child. Then I would surely have been sent away. My cousin Kitty and her sister had been sent down on the mailboat to Baton Rouge days ago. There were only my two uncles, my mother, and one aunt left on the plantation. I fought down the tears and said, shakily, "I don't want to go. I want to stay here. I'm not afraid."

"But if the levee breaks . . ."

"Hush, Paul; don't say such things!" This from my mother.

"I can swim!" I blurted it out.

They both laughed, and this broke the tension. My uncle rose from the table and pushed back his chair. "Well, for the present then . . . unless things get worse."

My mother kissed him. "We'll stay," she said. And she began to gather up the dishes from the tablecloth. "I told Aunt Rhody to go home," she said in explanation. "Mary and I will clear up to-night."

There was a little more talk, about coffee at midnight and again at three o'clock in the morning. "Better send over two large pots,

and get Uncle Isaac to keep the fire in the stove all night. We may need something."

I listened no longer. I was very glad that we were to stay on the plantation, high water or no high water.

But, just the same, it was a strange sight — those lines of toiling Negroes and white men. Cries resounded through the dark as the lanterns went bobbing about on the levee. My mother sat on the gallery for a long time, watching the bobbing lanterns. She didn't talk to me as usual, or tell me stories. She just sat there staring into the dark.

The lamplight made a golden path across the gallery and down the walk; the white pickets of the fence around the flower garden were seen dimly. We sat in silence, listening to the shouts from the levee, watching the flashing lights. After a while someone built a bonfire just outside the front gate, in order that there should be light on the levee just before the big house. I had never seen a fire there before, and it changed the familiar landscape. The big trees were black against the red glow; we could see men passing and repassing between us and the fire. I asked permission to go down to the front gate and watch, but my mother refused. "It's no place for us," she said; "we'd only be in the way."

The next day dragged through somehow. All day long my mother and my aunt worked in the kitchen with Aunt Rhody, making hundreds of sandwiches and gallons of coffee. The door of the smoke-house stood open, and from time to time one of the half-grown black girls would emerge carrying a shoulder of meat or a ham. When the bread was all gone, big boxes of soda crackers were opened and sandwiches made of these. I was allowed to help the black girls carry the tin trays of sandwiches down to the front gate. But on my second trip my uncle spied me and ordered me sternly back to the house. "Don't leave your mother for one minute," he said. Then, smiling in the midst of his admonition, he said, "You see, old fellow, we're having a lot of trouble, and you only hinder us if we have you on our minds as well as the levees!"

Things were worse in the afternoon. My uncle went down into the Negro quarters and rounded up all of the able-bodied Negro women. They followed him down to the levee. I knew that they were going down to help fill sandbags. There were other sand boils now, and water was seeping through into the big road just at one end of the front yard.

Nobody came to supper. I ate alone, at one end of the long table, gulping down my eggs and milk and biscuits, in order that I might go back to the front gallery and watch the levee workers.

The Negro women had finished their work and had gone back to the quarters. I could hear them laughing in the dark. My Aunt Mary stood in the back door looking out into the darkness. "How I envy their lightheartedness!" she said. My mother, filling an oil lamp just outside the dining-room door, replied with a question, "Do you suppose that they don't understand the danger, or is it merely that they don't care?"

Old Uncle Isaac, bowed and bent with age, came in to ask if the "white ladies" wanted anything. Mr. Paul had sent him. My mother told him to go upstairs and bring down a certain small leather trunk that stood in her bedroom. "We can pack the silver in that," she said to my aunt.

While they were putting in the knives and forks and other things — there were not many — my Uncle Paul came into the dining room and, dropping down at one end of the table, rested his head upon his hand. My mother stopped her packing and brought him food, but he was too tired to eat. He sat sipping black coffee. Uncle Isaac stood in the doorway looking at him. Uncle Isaac had taken care of my Uncle Paul when he was a little boy — just as little black Lawrence took care of me — and there was a deep bond between the two men.

"Yo' sho' Gawd oughta take some res'," he said to the white man.

My uncle shook his head. "I can't. I'm too worried about the levee." Suddenly he paused, smiled, and the lines of worry smoothed out of his face. "Why aren't you worried, Isaac?" he asked. "Nothing seems to bother you."

The old Negro shuffled his feet, grinned, and replied, "Well, to tell yo' de trufe, Mister Paul, I figgers dis way: 'Tain't no use in both of us worrying ovah de same thing!"

For the first time that day I saw my uncle's face relax. He roared with laughter. "That's the situation in a nutshell," he said.

Outside in the darkness we could hear the cries of Negro men as they drove the horses and mules into the front yard. They were putting them there tonight because they would be nearer the levee in case of overflow.

Everything seemed strange. Nothing was in its accustomed place. My mother and I slept in the guest room, downstairs, that night. Outside our door stood three trunks, packed with our clothes and a few possessions. I tossed about in the big four-post bed, looking up at

the tufted blue silk of the tester, for my mother had forgotten to draw the mosquito bar. A big white moth came and flew about the candle flame. I watched it drowsily. Outside I could still hear the shouts of men at intervals, and the creaking of the heavily loaded wheelbarrows. And I could hear the cows in the yard lowing — uneasy, because they were in an unaccustomed place. It all seemed strange and unreal; but finally all the noise blended itself into one murmuring, it seemed. And I slept.

“Crevasse! Crevasse!”

Shouts in the night. Hoarse cries. “Crevasse! Crevasse!”

There was a candle burning. My mother was helping me put on my shoes. I dragged on my clothes as best I could. My mother was fully dressed, all in black, beside me, urging me to hurry.

We went into the hall. In the doorway my aunt stood, looking out. She held a bundle in her arms. A Negro man was standing on the sofa, lifting down the portrait that hung above it — the same portrait of my great-aunt that had terrified me as a small boy. He placed it beside the trunks and ran halfway up the staircase in order to get the other portrait that hung there. In the lamplight I could see that there was a pale square on the wall where the portrait had hung. It had been hanging there for many years.

My Uncle Paul and a strange man came dashing up the front steps. “Hurry! Hurry!” they cried. “The water will be here any minute now!” We ran out together through the flower garden, leaving the front doors open behind us. My uncle and the other man were carrying a trunk between them. The Negro man had the two portraits. Other Negroes were lifting the trunks for us. We ran down the avenue under the arching trees. The moon was shining, clear and bright. Aunt Rhody emerged from the darkness, carrying a lighted lantern. “Ah’m goin’ tuh stay wid you, Mis’ Mary,” she said. Under her arm she was carrying a white rooster.

We ran. And as we hurried, I was conscious of a new sound, a dull roaring, deep and terrible. The sound of the crevasse.

Halfway down the avenue I cried out in dismay. There were many black snakes crossing the roadway — streams of water, as big around as my arm, writhing through the dust — already the crevasse water was upon us. We quickened our pace. The Negroes were panting as they ran. All around us from the dark came cries and shouts, and the stamping of animals.

“Look out!”

We stopped and turned to one side of the avenue, for through the front gate a stream of horses and mules was passing. The men were driving the animals out to the levee. One of the Negroes set down his burden and put his shoulder against the white pickets of the front fence. There was a rending sound and the picket fell away. We crawled through into the road. Behind us we heard the men knocking off another picket so the trunks could be passed through.

There was no water in the road, but the ditches were level full. We waded knee-deep in crossing them. Then the slope of the levee rose before us, and we began to climb up. My Uncle Paul was there, helping us. The men had abandoned the work on the levee — all useless now. Wheelbarrows of earth stood abandoned on the slope. Spades and shovels lay scattered about. The moon made everything clear. The levee was full of moving men.

At the top of the levee we stopped. We had reached our destination. The water outside lapped at the very top, rushing against the sandbags that were piled there. The levee top was muddy and tramped by many feet.

We were breathless, exhausted. I saw my mother sitting on her trunk, her hand pressed to her side. My Aunt Mary was beside her, her arm about her shoulder. My Uncle Paul was taking count of us.

"Is everyone here?" Then, a moment later, "Have we forgotten anything?"

The Negroes were driving the animals up on the levee. The mules and horses were excited, running about, kicking. The cows were lowing. We were in danger of being trampled underfoot at any moment. At the foot of the levee, far below us in the road, a Negro man on horseback was riding up and down, shouting. The frightened horses were trying to leave the levee and go down into the road again; he rode back and forth, driving them back upon the slope. The animals were all around us now. We barricaded ourselves as best we could behind trunks and bundles. A Negro man armed with a stick stood on guard, to keep the animals from stamping us to death.

"I think that you'll be safe enough here." It was my Uncle Paul speaking. "I'm going back to the quarters to see if everybody got out safely."

My mother tried to stop him. "Paul! You'll be drowned. The water must be waist-deep back there!" But he only waved his arm and smiled. "I'll be all right! I must go." And he rode down the slope of the levee. We watched him. The horse stopped at the wide ditch at the bottom, snorting, throwing up its head before the water

which was now covering the road. But my uncle struck the horse's neck with his hand, and the horse jumped over the ditch and went splashing across the road. We saw him disappear down the avenue which led to the house. My aunt buried her face in her hands.

Aunt Rhody was making inquiries of the other Negro women grouped around us concerning the safety of different people in the quarters. She was counting her nieces and nephews and cousins. "Wha's Leafy? Wha's Jeems? Wha's Queen? Wha's Dicey?"

Every moment it seemed that the roaring of the crevasse grew louder as the opening increased in size and the mad torrent of muddy water went sweeping over the fields. In the moonlight we could see the water in the road plainly now, and the fields showed water between the rows of sugar cane. But the plantation house stood there as serenely as ever, the lights in the hall burning bright. It seemed impossible that the water could rise high enough to enter the house, so secure and safe it seemed standing there, with the wide front door open and the lights streaming out into the trees. But from the levee top we could see the water, far back in the field. The whole plantation would be under before morning.

Around us the animals bellowed and snorted. They made futile dashes down the slope to the edge of the road, then came rushing back. Negro men moved about, trying to quiet them, fearing that some would be killed or would fall into the deep ditch. Near us stood Uncle Isaac, armed with a stick, driving off the animals when they came too close.

My aunt and my mother were frantic with anxiety for my uncle's safety. It seemed hours before he came into sight again, still on horse-back; but the horse was more than knee-deep in water now, and my uncle was wet through, for both he and the horse had fallen into some deep ditch which was hidden below the rising water. Behind him on the horse was the old Negro woman, Aunt Julia. She was crying and moaning as he helped her up the levee. She had lost all her treasures — her pattern quilt, her "buryin' clothes," everything. These things had been put into Mattie's boat — but Mattie had allowed her boat to dry out — and it had sunk. Aunt Julia had barely escaped with her life.

The other Negroes, my uncle reported, were all safe and would remain in their boats until morning. Some of them were already making their way toward the levee as the water increased in depth. But there was a strong current running from the crevasse and it made the passage difficult.

"The supports under the back of the house are beginning to go," he concluded.

"That means that the house will go?" my aunt asked. He nodded. "I'm afraid so."

He rode away from us, down the levee toward the crevasse. We tried to comfort Aunt Julia, but she only moaned and cried for her lost possessions.

It seemed a long time before my uncle came riding back, with the news that the levee was caving rapidly, and that we must move farther along in order to be safe. "For with the river rushing at this rate," he said, "there's no telling how wide the break will be."

Accordingly, we began a sorry pilgrimage along the levee top, moving farther away from the house at every step. The Negroes moved with us, slowly, carrying their bundles and baskets with them. Many of them had saved their dogs, and we went forward like a broken army in retreat.

Our dogs were with us, worried, frightened. They remained close at heel, whimpering at intervals.

And behind us the cattle came, moving slowly, held in check by the Negroes. The cows never ceased lowing.

After we had gone five hundred yards or more along the levee top we stopped again. Our possessions were put down, and we took inventory again. The portrait of my great-aunt lay on the levee slope at our feet. The familiar face, its dark, tragic eyes staring upward, seemed strangely unreal in the moonlight.

Just as we paused, the cattle and mules began to stampede. We were swept under a rush of bodies, almost trampled upon, almost forced in the rushing water just below us on the riverside. I saw a terrified mule come down upon me, and threw up my arm for protection; he shied off and went blundering down the slope, but the mule behind him crashed into the portrait that was lying on the grass. I saw the forefoot of the animal go through the painted face, and when he pulled it out again there was only a gaping hole, with the white clover showing through, and the gold frame glinting in the moonlight.

It was perhaps an hour later that I heard my mother cry out and, following the direction of her gaze, I saw that the lights in the plantation house had gone out; the water had risen high enough to extinguish the lamps on the marble-topped table in the hall.

Slowly the long night passed. The first gray showed in the eastern sky. When the moonlight had faded, we sat disconsolately watching the water rise higher and higher on the land side of the levee. It was



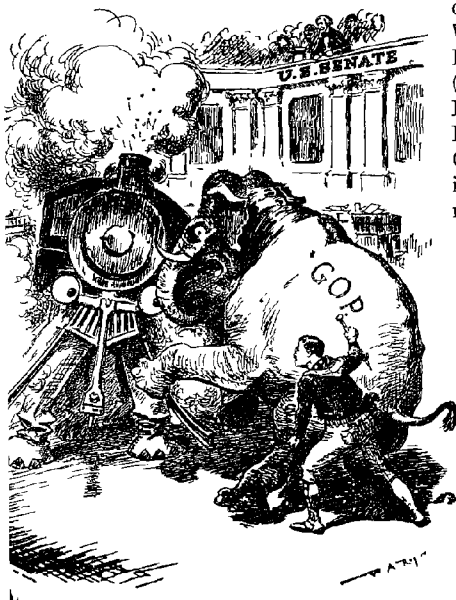




*Photos, Culver*

**CARTOONS FOR REFORM.** The talent of Thomas Nast, one of America's greatest cartoonists, was potent in exposing and convicting the notorious Boss Tweed, the large man with the diamond in the cartoon "Who Stole the People's Money?" (*top*).

Typical of his lighter cartoons is his gibe at Woman's Rights, "Woman's Kingdom Is at Home" (*below*). At the left W. A. Rogers pictures Theodore Roosevelt goading on the G.O.P. "To a Finish" in its fight in the Senate for regulation of the railroads.





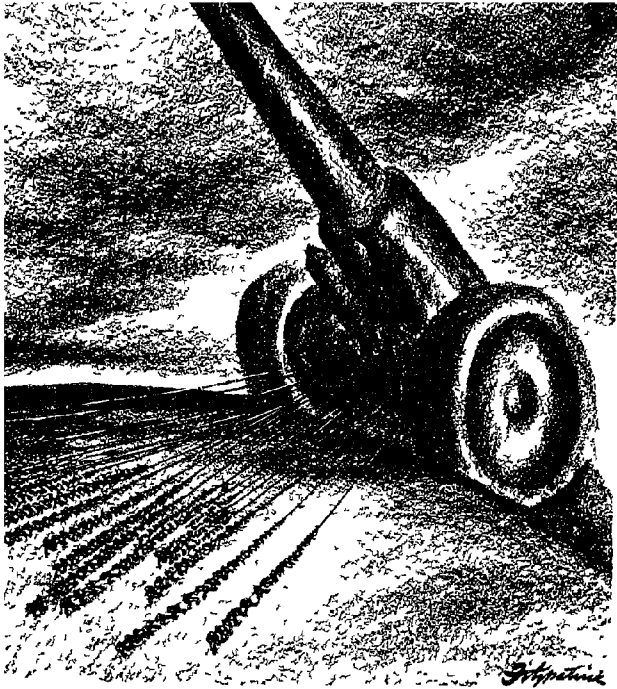
*Courtesy of Mrs George Bellows*

SPORTS SKETCHES. Perhaps the cartoonists come even closer to human nature in the sports world than in politics. All summer long the baseball fans get into rows about the umpire, as they are doing in George Bellows' "The Great American Game" (*above*). And all summer long, girls sit in the sun on the beaches to be admired, as Charles Dana Gibson shows his famous "Gibson Girls" doing. Only the bathing suits have changed.



*Courtesy of Charles Dana Gibson*

*Picturesque America — Anywhere Along the Coast*



Courtesy of Daniel R  
Fitzpatrick



ECHOES AND PROPHECIES A cartoonist to be ranked with Nast is Daniel R Fitzpatrick of the St Louis *Post-Dispatch*. His powerful drawing "Progress of Humanity" (above) is as timely in 1940 as it was during the World War of 1914-18, when it was drawn. No less significant for later years is Boardman Robinson's 1915 sketch of Uncle Sam as "The Innocent Bystander" (left) struck by the stray projectile "increased cost of living" whirling out of conflict in Europe.

Courtesy of Boardman Robinson

more than halfway up now, and the river outside the levee had fallen two feet or more as the current rushed through the crevasse.

We watched the sun rise round and red over the ruined fields. And in its first rays we saw that the plantation house was askew; the whole building slanted down sharply to one side; one of the chimneys had fallen. The water was almost at the top of the front door. The flower garden and the shrubs had disappeared. Only the trees remained, standing with water halfway up their trunks, each tree making a fan-shaped ripple in the current. Between us and the ruined house was an unbroken stretch of muddy water.

The river had taken the land again. The plantation of my childhood no longer existed.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. One source of the vividness in this story is the number of pictures Mr. Saxon provides for the mind's eye. Name five or six that are vivid to you.
2. What great floods do you recall having read or heard about in your own lifetime in our country? in other countries?
3. What is the relationship between erosion and flood?
4. What other natural disasters do men fall victim to? What measures are being taken to combat them?

#### *For Ambitious Students*

5. Diagram and explain to the class the levee system of flood control. Is the levee system adequate to meet the threat of flood? What large-scale flood-control projects are now under way?
6. If you have ever experienced a flood, write a vivid account of the occurrence.

### THE MAN WITH A TRACTOR

by MORROW MAYO (1897- )

Today farming, like most of our occupations, is feeling the tremendous shock of new methods and techniques arising from the mechanical and scientific advances of recent years. Each new invention brings with it both advantages and problems. The effect of this progress on a Dust Bowl farmer is here movingly told by Morrow Mayo, a California ex-farmer himself.

SANK DROVE into a field that was full of thistles, broomweeds, careless weeds, winterweeds, goatheads, and blueweeds. The wind was out of the southwest and there were scattering clouds in the east and thunderheads to the north. Despite the rank vegetation, the truck left a trail of dust like a destroyer laying down a smoke screen.

At intervals he got out and bored into a red catclaw land with a three-foot soil auger. When he unscrewed the auger he pulled the dark moist earth out of the augerhead, sniffed it, made little balls, and threw them to the ground. He had to drive in low, and twice the truck started to boil. He headed it into the wind, cut off the motor, and let it cool.

He finished in the northwest corner of the field and stood looking out over the woolly land. It was a beautiful half section, so level that he could see the bottom of the weeds a mile away. There was not a tree, stump, lake, or rock in it. Sank lighted a cigarette, thinking. It was a crime to let land go like that. His hands, face, clothes, shoes, and hat were the same color as the reddish dusty topsoil on which he stood. There was plenty of deep-moisture. It would not be good farming, but a man had to do many things here that he wouldn't do if conditions were different. He got into his truck and drove to the unpainted frame house which stood near the northeast corner of the field.

Sank stopped his tractor in the edge of the field, headed west. He lowered the disks of the one-way plow, socking the levers down to the last notch. He wanted to get all that stuff. In the third speed, making three and one-half miles an hour, he took off. The disks cut into the earth like circle saws, throwing the soil one way. The weeds fell as soldiers sometimes fall, going up into the air and pitching forward head first, roots up.

He plowed until dark, walked to the house and ate his supper, rested a little while, and returned to the field. He turned on his lights. One bright eye gleaming on the weeds ahead, one on the plow behind, the tractor lumbered over the land, snorting fire.

It was mighty bleak out there at night. Some wit had called this country the Siberia of America, and he was righter than he knew. There is not much difference between the great wheatlands of the world: between the Siberian steppes and the Australian prairies and the Argentine pampas and the high plains of North America. It is different only in the Danubian countries. All the others are vast uplands — immense, limitless, very similar in appearance, in scenery, in

vegetation; very similar nowadays, even down to tractors and implements, and men. Blindfold a man, take him from a tractor on one, put him on a tractor on another, would he know the difference?

At midnight the wind shifted to the west. Going east, the dust blew over Sank; going west, the heat hit him in the face. Horses, no matter how many, got tired eventually. The tractor did not get tired. It was six and one-half feet tall, twelve feet long, and eight feet wide. It weighed fifty-three hundred pounds. The rubber tires on the rear wheels were larger than a woman's body. Sank never wondered what would happen if that monster got out of control, stampeded, or turned on its driver.

It was two o'clock when he stopped. He was asleep by two-thirty, up again before daylight. He plowed eighteen hours a day, and finally he was through. He raised the disks and drove to the house. It was too hot for early September. The windmill was not turning; the sky was clear. No-weather was a weather breeder. Sank slept ten hours.

A blue norther had struck. The land to the south was a powder house. The thin row of young Chinese elms bent low. Sank saw a hawk wheel in the sky in the face of that wind. Across the great level pasture to the east a jack rabbit was loping easily, on four legs, on three. He ran, then coasted. The hawk folded his wings and dropped like a small black bomb tossed from an airplane. The jack rabbit was not coasting now. He was doing forty miles an hour.

The hawk struck, staggered, rose slowly with the weight, great wings flapping. High enough in the air, he opened his talons. The rabbit fell to earth, hit the hard ground, did not move. In slow, triumphant circles the hawk descended to his dinner.

Sank backed his truck into the barn and got down and closed the doors with difficulty. The wind was blowing a young gale. He backed his truck to the other end of the barn, and parked it up close to a mound of seed wheat — pure black hull wheat, strong, high in protein content, one hundred and fifty bushels of it. Near the pile of wheat Sank set up his seed-wheat-treating machine.

Before he opened the half-gallon can of chemical, Sank put on a gas mask. The can had a skull and crossbones on it. The chemical prevented wheat from becoming infected with smut. In this country smut losses from untreated wheat sometimes run as high as fifty per cent. The fumes from the chemical will kill a man. Sank poured the thick, black, sticky liquid into the seed-wheat-treating machine, started the gasoline motor, picked up a scoop, and started scooping

the seed wheat into the machine. The wheat ran through the chemical, up the funnel, and poured out of the spout into the truck.

Usually Sank was just an ordinary-looking man, just an average-looking farmer, with arms and legs, a mouth and eyes, a wife and two children. Working there in that barn, the wind howling outside, in the dim half-light, with that gas mask on, and the rats scurrying around, he didn't look like a farmer. He looked like a product of a more advanced civilization. He didn't even look like a man. He looked like some horrible, sightless, anthropoidal thing with a snout.

He scooped the golden grain and it was hard work. He didn't quit until he had put it all through the machine. Then he threw down the scoop, cut off the motor, took off his gas mask, and went to the house. He noticed the thin row of young Chinese elms again. Last year the saplings had bent flat to the ground before the force of the onslaught. This year the Chinese elms were not bowing their heads quite so low. Next year . . .

The wind had subsided as suddenly as it had struck. Sank went out and unhitched his plow, hitched the tractor to the drill, set the sprockets of the drill so that it would sow twenty pounds to the acre, and scooped the seed wheat into the drill bins until they were level full. He oiled and watered and fueled the tractor and lubricated both tractor and drill. Then he lowered the disks, cranked the tractor, threw it into fourth speed, and took off up the edge of the plowed field, making four miles an hour, sowing wheat.

Wheat is undoubtedly the finest, most courageous thing that grows on the face of the earth. The implement drilled the seed wheat into the earth. If I were called upon to award the first prize to the best thing that grows, I should walk up and hang the gold medal over the head of a stalk of hard winter wheat. The disks made little planting furrows; the drill set down the single grains of wheat in the furrows; the drag-chains covered them over with soil. It was all mechanical. It was different from the days, from Joseph down to not so long ago, when a man dipped into a sack of seed wheat and sowed it by hand, three scattering throws to the handful.

When Sank put the grains into the soil they were hard as rocks. Twelve hours later they were mealy. Six hours later they were sprouting. This is when the farmers say the earth is moving. Put it in a glass and you can see it grow. Twenty-four hours after Sank put the first hard grains into the soil, the brave, pale green shoots were thrusting themselves up out of the earth. There is nothing petty or knick-knacky or clever or obscene about anything connected with wheat. It

is clean and strong and vital. Wheat is bread. It is the staff of life.

When Sank came up the east side he saw the Chinese elms. On the west side he looked at a great pasture of Argentine pampas grass. On the south side he passed a sixty-foot border of African Sudan grass. Originally it had prevented the Sudan from blowing Egypt off the map. Now they have got it working in the Dust Bowl. And all about Sank were the big green Russian thistles which he had plowed up, and which would become huge tumbleweeds and go galloping over the plains like horses.

Argentine pampas grass, African Sudan, Russian thistles, and Chinese elms. From the four corners of the earth. All growing together right in the Panhandle, U. S. A. Nature — if nobody else — was getting international. Nature and machinery. Neither spoke any language, noticed any color, recognized any boundary. So there was still hope for men. . . .

It had better be noted, the metamorphosis of the man with the hoe. Millet, on canvas, caught and held that brutish, hopeless earthpecker leaning on a crude hand tool. Markham, beholding him, appalled, asked greatly and bitterly, why and how? The tragedy of the world was summed up in that eloquent painting, those awful words. But you can't say, "Bowed by the weight of centuries, he leans upon his F-30 tractor."

Driving that tractor Sank didn't look like a humble and degraded tiller of the soil. He didn't look like a hay-chewing rube with chin whiskers, or a dunghill yokel, or a peasant without thought or hope. The tractor had done that. It had changed a farmer from a clod into an operator; from a dumb brute into a mechanic, all over the world. The tractor had done more to make him a self-respecting man than anything that had ever happened in the whole history of agriculture since the invention of the wheel.

The man with the tractor does not gaze on the ground. Unavoidably, by the nature of things, Sank sat and gazed at the distant horizon, which was on a level with his eyes. He gazed at it when the sky was clear and steel-blue, and when the moon set behind clouds that moved slowly in serried masses, and when the sun came up like a ball of fire, a flaming red.

Sank finished sowing his wheat. He raised the disks out of the ground and drove his tractor over the impregnated earth toward his house. It was twilight. The sky was overcast and the air was sultry. But you couldn't say, "The plowman homeward plods his weary



wide for his chemical wizardry in creating useful new products from such stuff as peanut shells and fallen leaves, which most of us waste and throw away.

That saggy alpaca coat covered a Bachelor of Science, Master of Science, Honorary Doctor of Science; winner of the Spingarn Medal for Negro achievement; member of the Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce of Great Britain.

Yet as I looked at him, studied his kindly face, and recalled what I had heard of the story of his life, I saw that the figure of the man himself was not half so fantastic or unbelievable as is the record of his achievement.

Dr. George Washington Carver started with nothing. He never had anything. Yet out of nothing he has created inestimable wealth for fellow human beings to whom he has devoted his life.

Born a slave child, he began life without even so much as a name. He never knew his father. He never knew his mother. To this day he doesn't know just when he was born, though he figures his age at somewhere close to seventy. Without a red cent he worked out his own early schooling, then his higher college education, then the post-graduate work for his Master of Science degree. All his life he has been joyously at work with common, everyday things, making something out of nothing or next to nothing. During the thirty-six years in which he has been director of agricultural research at Tuskegee Institute, that has been his work. And out of it have come scientific marvels:

From wood shavings he has made synthetic marble.

From peanut shells he has made insulating walls for houses.

From the muck of swamps and the leaves of the forest floor he has made valuable fertilizers.

From cow dung he has made paint.

From the common, ordinary peanut he has made two hundred and eighty-five useful products, including milk, butter, cheese, candies, instant coffee, pickles, sauces, oils, shaving lotions, wood stains, dyes, lard, linoleum, flour, breakfast foods, soap, stock foods, face powder, tan remover, shampoo, printer's ink, and even axle grease!

From the lowly sweet potato he has made one hundred and eighteen products, among them flour, meal, starch, library paste, vinegar, shoe blacking, ginger, ink, rubber compound, chocolate compound, dyes, molasses, wood filler, caramels.

From clays of the earth he has made nonfading paints and pigments.

From worn-out, sandy soil he has produced paying crops.

Something from nothing. And this is only a portion of his work. Experts say that he has probably done more than any other living man to rehabilitate agriculture in the South.

And more still. Dr. Carver is also an artist, especially skilled in painting flowers. His paintings have been exhibited at world fairs, and at least one is going to the Luxembourg Gallery in Paris after his death. He makes all his own paints, using Alabama clays. The paper he paints on he makes from peanut shells, and the frames for his pictures he makes out of cornhusks. His work in embroidery and crochet has won prizes in various exhibits. He has woven gorgeous rugs with fibers he had made from cotton stalks. He is a skilled musician, too — once he toured the Middle West as a concert pianist. And last, but not least, he is an expert cook. His recipes are used today in some of the leading hotels of the country.

All this does sound a bit incredible, doesn't it? I confess that when I set out for Tuskegee to see and talk with Dr. Carver I was more than skeptical of many of the stories I had heard about him. And so, after he had entertained the visiting delegations from Washington, I returned to see him, in his office in the big brick building, with many doubts lingering in my mind.

He was sitting behind a desk cluttered inches high with letters and papers. On top of the papers were the sticks and wild flowers that I had seen him carrying that morning. As I went in, he was looking through a microscope at the stem of a wild rose.

"I beg your pardon," I said.

The old man raised his head and looked at me; then, taking hold of the edge of the desk to steady himself, he pushed himself up from his squeaky swivel chair. He wore a long canvas apron that was splotted and stained. His gold-rimmed spectacles rested far down on his nose. Standing there so tall despite his noticeable stoop, he peered over the tops of his spectacles and smiled at me.

"Good morning," he said, and the quiet tone of his voice blended with the gentle sincerity of his smile.

In slight confusion, then, I explained why I had called on him.

"Do you mind if I stay here a while?" I asked. "I'd like to very much — that is, if I won't trouble you."

"It will be a pleasure, sir, a very great pleasure to me."

I was touched by his gentleness, and by an unmistakable spiritual quality in the glow of his face. Frankly, I was confused. To open the conversation, I remarked on the numerous Maxfield Parrish paintings that hang on his office walls. "Somehow they seem a little out of place in the office of a scientist," I said lamely.

"But can't a scientist be a lover of the beautiful?" he asked. "There is no one of the moderns who uses blue half so well as Maxfield Parrish uses it."

And then he was off. For forty-five minutes he shuffled about his office, showing me how Maxfield Parrish uses blue, and telling how the ancients used the color. Quietly, even humbly, he told how the Egyptians loved it, how they had adorned their homes and tombs with it.

Then he led me from his office across the hall into his laboratory, a room about thirty by twenty feet. It was filled with racks and shelves and tables, bottles and tubes and retorts. He picked up a jar and carried it to the window. "See" — and he held it to the sun.

And I saw the richest, the purest blue that I have ever seen.

Dr. Carver was talking quietly as he tilted the jar one way and the other, giving the sun its full chance to mate with the glorious color. "I believe," he went on, "that it's a rediscovery of the old Egyptian blue. A number of chemists have come to see it, and they agree with me. At present I'm working on the Egyptian purple; I believe that soon we shall have that too.

"I get my dyes," the old man continued, "from Alabama clays. You remember what the Bible says" — Dr. Carver has built his life on what the Bible says — "you remember that the Bible says, 'Look to the hills from whence cometh your help.' I did it; I looked to these Alabama hills, and I made these dyes from the clays that I found there. All these dyes and paints" — he waved toward thirty-six boards, each of which was colored differently — "all of them were made from Alabama clay — all," he added, "except this one; it was made from rotten sweet potatoes; and this one, which was made from cow dung; and this one, a much finer paint, was made from horse dung."

After I had been an hour in Dr. Carver's laboratory, after I had seen rope made from okra fiber; baskets from wistaria; and dyes from the dandelion, black oak, wood ashes, sweet gum, swamp maple, sweet potato, pomegranate, peanut, Osage orange, muscadine grape, onion, velvet bean, and tomato vine — after I had seen those discoveries, among a few hundred others, I was willing to believe almost anything possible to this kindly man to whom apparently brick without straw<sup>1</sup> would be a simple problem.

<sup>1</sup> **brick without straw:** When the Israelites were held as slaves by the Egyptians, they were commanded to make brick without straw. The fifth chapter of Exodus tells the whole story.

"When you do the common things of life in an uncommon way," Dr. Carver once said to his students, "you will command the attention of the world." In that sentence lies the secret of his own achievement.

He was born in a rude slave cabin on the farm of Moses Carver near Diamond Grove, Mo. Moses Carver owned his mother, and a neighbor owned his father. When he was a baby six months old, night riders swooped down on his master's plantation and carried away a number of slaves, among them the baby and his mother.

In their flight, the raiders took no care of the child; he developed whooping cough and was dying when emissaries sent out by Moses Carver arrived from Missouri to buy back the stolen slaves.

But the mother had already been disposed of; no one ever learned what became of her. Indeed, there is only one thing of hers that is left: In Doctor Carver's room in one of the dormitories at Tuskegee is a battered old spinning wheel on which his mother spun flax when she was a slave. A friend of Doctor Carver's said to me, "I've seen him touch that wheel; he touches it like a priest reverently touching an altar. I sometimes feel that if I could be in his room when he retires, I should hear the old man say 'Good night' to that wheel."

The emissaries sent to ransom the stolen slaves finally struck a bargain with the night riders. The baby was evaluated and traded back to his owner; he was traded for a broken-down race horse worth about \$300!

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Point out all the things about Dr. Carver's life and work that are unusual. Why are his experiments and discoveries of especial value to the nation as a whole?
2. What other new products have been developed by chemical experimentation in recent years? Discuss vocational opportunities in the field of chemistry.
3. Name other outstanding Negroes now living. A series of oral reports would provide an interesting class hour. Perhaps these reports can be given in the form of a "Who Am I?" radio program.
4. Read the life story of another great Negro educator, Booker T. Washington. His autobiography is *Up from Slavery*.

## INVENT YOUR OWN CAREER

*by* JOHN ERSKINE (1879- )

As you look ahead to the end of your schooling, there looms before you the serious and possibly disquieting question, "How am I going to get a job and earn an adequate living?" It is an important question, one on which you should gather many facts, ask yourself many questions, and seek out the wisest advice.

In contrast to the many sober and somewhat pessimistic writings on vocational guidance comes this challenging, optimistic message from John Erskine, formerly professor of English at Columbia University, now well known for his brilliant novels based on ancient legends, which he retells with much gusto and humor. Let this article be a springboard for a plunge into your study of one of the most vital of your personal problems.

WHEN YOU were in school did some well-meaning person tell the class what careers were open to you? I had that experience forty years ago. We were told we could be a minister, businessman, doctor, lawyer, teacher, writer, or politician. We were also warned that these professions were crowded.

The same advice is given today. New inventions have brought new kinds of work, but our choice is still laid before us in timeworn patterns.

We should laugh at such counsel. Life is not fossilized, though the vocational experts may be. There are more than a meager dozen ways to serve our fellows profitably. Society, always moving on, turns up fresh needs. We can pick them out if we use our imagination — that is, if we see what is under our eyes.

There is much talk nowadays about diagnosing talent and fitting it into the proper niche. As though talent were a dislocated bone, for a doctor to set. Why not find our own place? Would the diagnosticians have advised Thomas Edison, when he was only a telegraph operator, to produce the electric bulb? Or Henry Ford, while yet an obscure mechanic, to give us a low-priced car? Edison and Ford gave that advice to themselves.

I once lived in a very small college town. The boys would have looked for no career in such a place. Yet they made constant use of a repair shop, run by a man who had more imagination than most of his customers. Originally, he had been a watchmaker, but there weren't enough watches in the neighborhood to live on. However, he saw plenty of other mending work in a world which wears out. When

I knew him he was famous for miles around, busy mending everything but human beings, and by them beloved as a heaven-sent benefactor. No job was too humble or too difficult. The boys took to him their bicycles and tennis rackets; the housewives their fine china; the college astronomer called him in to devise adjustments for the telescope; the mathematician sent him a decrepit adding machine. In the morning he mended for me a coffee percolator; in the evening he attended the science club at the college, where his contributions to the discussion were heard with respect by the faculty.

Why should he seem an extraordinary type? Everyone who makes a real contribution to society is in some degree like him, chiefly in common sense and in the full use of imagination. He saw nothing remarkable in what he had done. Whether or not he knew it, he was only a quiet follower of Nathaniel Bowditch, the New England boy who began a hundred years before as a sailor, taught himself Latin and mathematics so that he could read Newton, revised the science of navigation, and published an epoch-making book which enabled the clipper ships to outsail their rivals and which is today a classic among all mariners. Just a sailor — with imagination. Read the inspiring account of him which Van Wyck Brooks gives in *The Flowering of New England*.

A few years ago a farmer in the South, compelled by family illness to raise some cash, found nothing on his place to sell except one boxwood shrub and an old millstone. In despair he carted them to town. He did not know that architects use boxwood for landscaping and old millstones to add picturesqueness to gardens. When he discovered that they did, he turned to producing boxwood in quantity and collecting old millstones. Now he comes north to consult with architects, who consider him a unique specialist.

A Wall Street man, wrecked by the depression, had nothing left but a little land in the suburbs. Resolved to avoid competition, he began raising goats. His farm is now a model of its kind, and he cannot supply the demand for his goat milk.

No field is harder to succeed in than the arts, yet I think of two men, a musician and a painter, who shaped for themselves solid careers in the very places where their friends prophesied for them no career at all. The musician had to leave home to study the violin; his city of one hundred thousand persons could not furnish a first-rate teacher.

Splendidly equipped at last for a virtuoso's career, the young man puzzled his folks by coming home and setting up a studio. He argued that where there were few musicians there would be little competition;

and if a competent teacher made his appearance, future students would be glad, as once he would have been, to save the expense of going away.

But, protested his friends, didn't you intend to give concerts? This isn't a concert-going town. And didn't you think of becoming a conductor? There is no orchestra here.

He answered them, long ago. As soon as his first pupils played well enough, he formed a little string band and gave performances for their admiring relatives. When his pupils were far advanced, he presented them with careers by setting them to prepare younger pupils for him, and at the earliest possible moment he included the younger pupils in his concert group.

Now he has a full orchestra, giving a dozen concerts each season. When I heard it there was an audience of about two thousand. The price of admission is low. After expenses are paid, the money is divided among the players. The leader has his reward in a waiting list of those who wish to study with him, and still more in the knowledge that he has made his city musical.

The painter is a young man I met on the Pacific Coast. After he had knocked till he was tired at the doors of collectors and art dealers, he loaded his pictures on a truck and drove into the desert. At each ranch he would lean his paintings against the wire fence, for all hands to inspect. If anyone expressed a liking for a canvas, he sold it for what he could get. At the end of a few weeks he returned with an empty truck and his pockets full of money. His business steadily improved. A picture on the wall of one ranch made other ranch owners art-conscious, and patrons were waiting for the next visit of the truck.

In one of the national parks I saw a young architect who had invented a profitable though seasonal market for his talents. He could draw well, and the park was full of young folks on horseback. He would sketch the portrait of your horse for twenty-five dollars. The demand was terrific. To keep hand and eye fresh he did only one horse a day. Even then . . .

No outsider can tell you of the undeveloped opportunities which lie at your hand wherever you are, but by way of illustration let me remind you of two nationwide needs.

Since most of us have little to spend, the low-priced motorcar ought to be supplemented by an equally comfortable and low-priced hotel. In one or two places in the Southwest I have seen tourist camps developed into what might be the prophecy of a new kind of entertain-

ment along all roads, but in general the cheap camp remains in every sense cheap.

There are also far too few places in our country where you can get good food well cooked. It costs no more to cook well than to cook badly. Our few good restaurants owe their success to the skill of some exceptional person who knows what to do in the kitchen. I suppose the career of a cook does not appeal to our intelligentsia. In France they long ago learned differently.

Our whole prejudice against the crafts and against manual work is foolish in the extreme. In selecting a career most of us are snobs. We rightly desire a good education, but with a college degree we wouldn't for the world choose deliberately a life of manual labor. Yet there is no reason why the carpenter and the plumber and the chef should not be as cultured as the doctor or the banker, and many a well-educated man would find his happiness in the tasks which he has been taught to believe are too humble for him.

I have known boys in college whose hearts' desire was satisfied only by sailing a boat. In a saner time they would have gone to sea, like old Nathaniel Bowditch. I have played with an orchestra where the leader of second violins was a violinmaker who had furnished most of the other string players with their instruments. I understand that good watchmakers are now rare and command high wages.

You will hear, of course, that modern industry has driven out the old-fashioned craftsman, but I doubt it. What drives him out is a grave mistake in our thinking. The first and last wisdom in choosing a career is to look for what is needed near at hand. The need which we are able to recognize, we are probably fitted to supply.

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. List some of the questions a boy or girl should ask himself before he decides on a certain vocation.
2. List some of the questions you would ask a vocational expert. Let the class discuss these. Then write to someone who you think can advise you well. Ask him definite questions; do not expect him to write you an essay on how to get a job.
3. What are some of the services that an enterprising person could offer in your community?
4. Write a letter applying for a position. Be definite, confident, and polite. Think what a prospective employer would like to know about you. Organize your letter carefully.



*For Ambitious Students*

5 A series of talks on a number of vocations, each presented by a different student, would be valuable for the class. Include requisite personal characteristics, training, difficulties, satisfactions, and financial returns.

## A TALK WITH YOUTH

BROADCAST OVER THE COLUMBIA NETWORK

*by* WILLIAM ALLEN WHITE (1868— )

In American life today no problem is so acute or so thrilling as the problem of appreciating and preserving our liberty. We cannot close our eyes to the fact that in many countries of the world democracy has yielded to dictatorship, and that even in our own country some of the fundamental principles of the democratic way of life are being challenged. In a dictatorship only the rulers need — indeed, dare — to discuss the origin and destiny of their way of government — but in America the problem concerns us all for in a democracy responsible citizenship is not only our right but our sacred duty.

William Allen White is peculiarly fitted to talk to American youth about America. Editor of a small Kansas newspaper for nearly fifty years, a friend and adviser of two generations of men in public office, a lifelong student and historian of American life, he knows our country well. And he combines shrewd practicality with idealism, a blend that represents American citizenship at its best.

THE WISEST article in our Constitution is the provision against titles of nobility. For one hundred and fifty years that provision has kept America a middle-class nation. Of course, we have had social stratification, but the classes we have had are not hereditary. In America individuals rise and fall into and out of the classes with wholesome alacrity. Not the same people are poor today, nor are the sons and daughters of the poor those who were poor yesterday. In every American family, between the grandchild and the grandparents, there is much real contact with men and women going up and down the scale. The middle class, therefore, knows practically what it is to be rich and what it is to be poor.

This ability to see another's viewpoint has been the spiritual leaven in our democracy. We have developed an understanding heart.

Only in America are the rich so universally prodigal with their benefices. Only here have the poor failed to crystallize into a conscious class.

Along other lines Americans have been seemingly divided, but in fact they are united. We have in this country various regional divisions which are more than geographical areas. These regions, settled by another race, might break into separate nations. For each region has its own interests; it is developing somewhat its own kind of Americans. But all these regions live peaceably under one flag.

We are bred of many racial strains; they are gradually amalgamating. Protestant, Jew, and Catholic worship side by side with no serious thought of disunion.

True, the world we have made is a pretty sad botch. It is full of gross injustices. Obviously a couple of centuries of hard work needs to be done on it before America is finished in millennial beauty. But with all these inequities, the old thing does hold together — which is something.

Today, as never before, various tyrannies are moving across Europe, each challenging liberty in its own way. That they will attack America no one can doubt.

How can we Americans immunize ourselves? The thing that has bound America into one nation is tolerance and patience, upheld by a sense of duty. Your fathers, mothers, and remote ancestors believed in *the reality of duty*. Upon that madness they built the world.

I feel, and my generation has believed in a general way, that democracy with its freedom, patience, tolerance, altruism, is a rough attempt to institutionalize the Christian philosophy.

Our Constitution, for instance, is a national compact of our individual and of our social duties. It has worked in this country after a fashion. Yet nearly the same Constitution has been adopted in a dozen other lands and has failed. Why has it held us to an essential unity? I am satisfied that our Constitution has stood up because Americans actually have established here a working sense of duty. That has been the crystallizing principle that has held us together — duty of man to man — and it has bred something more than neighborly tolerance. It has engendered a profound desire in every American's heart to make life as pleasant as it may be made; not merely for himself — indeed, not chiefly for himself — but for others. Thus we have found and cherished true liberty.

Liberty, if it shall cement man into political unity, must be something more than a man's conception of his rights, much more than his

desire to fight for his own rights. True liberty is founded upon a lively sense of the rights of others and a fighting conviction that the rights of others must be maintained. Only when a people have this love of liberty, this militant belief in the sacredness of another man's self-respect, can they achieve the miracle of national unity and strength.

We Americans have had it for three hundred years on this continent. It was the basis of our faith in humanity when we wrote our Constitution — this capacity for compromise, this practical passion for social justice in settling the genuine differences of men. This quality is no slight gift. It is a heroic spiritual endowment.

We have set as a national custom the habit of majority rule. It is maintained not by arms but by a saving sense in the heart of every minority that any majority will not be puffed up, will not infringe upon the rights of the minority. Matching this duty of the majority to be fair, we have set up the component duty of the minority to be patient, but to agitate until the justice of a losing cause has convinced the winning majority. This American tradition of political adjustment cuts through all differences in our social organization. As our country expanded geographically, this political genius for unity has tapped our store of certain basic virtues: neighborly forbearance, unselfishness, faith in our fellows, hope in the triumph of reason, and love for humanity. These common-sense qualities which have grown out of the beatitudes have helped to preserve the American Union for the last century and a half. Now, what are *you* going to do about it?

A notion is abroad that youth doesn't have much use for duty, for patience, and for tolerance. We oldsters get the general idea that you have no sort of faith in the strength of the humble. Yet it is out of this lack of faith that a new challenge has appeared in America — a challenge which scorns these lowly neighborly virtues that have held our world together. We are being told that the majority sometimes has emergency mandates to ignore the rights of the minorities. We have set up rulers all over the earth who preach against the virtue of patience.

It is a new thing in our America to hear men defending the tyrannies of Europe, declaring that the minority may oppress the majority if the minority happens to be convinced that it is right. It is even a stranger doctrine in America.

Now, let me caution you that these new political attitudes are symptoms of greed for power. They will fool you if you channel your thinking into narrow dialectics. Don't take your logical premise from

your class self-interest. Don't build your logic upon a purely selfish structure. Don't think as plutocrats. Don't reason as members of the middle class or as proletarians. Such thinking rejects the possibility that there may be truth and reason in the contention of another class of society.

This same discord that has torn Europe asunder where fifty years ago democracy seemed to be taking root, today is seeding in our land. Capitalists are scorning labor leaders. Labor leaders are preaching distrust and hatred for capitalists. The class-conscious arrogance of wealth is creating its own class morals. Proletarian logic is justifying the use of force and cunning in class conflict. The industrialist shuts his eyes to the farmer's plight.

We have been told that from this old earth, if everyone is at work, we can produce plenty for all. That statement is the social dynamite that is causing the political upheaval now rocking the world. It will rock your world too.

For it is one of those plausible, factual things that are not truthful. We can, indeed, produce plenty if everyone works, but to put everyone to work requires executive brains of a high order. Those brains are exceptional brains. They give a necessary social return. They require exceptional rewards. Your own particular problem will be to make the adjustments between those who work and those who give direction to work. It is a delicate problem. It will wrinkle your brains and it may break your hearts. Certainly it will keep you busy for a generation.

No leader is wise enough to establish industrial justice by ukase. No party can write the answer to your search for ultimate social truth in its platform. Only by long, patient, honest, brave, wise experiment and by sad failure can you bequeath to the youth of 1987 some approximate to social equity which will produce lasting industrial peace.

Yet you dare not ignore the call. You must do all you can, knowing you are starting upon a long journey — perhaps forty years in the wilderness!

The residuum of what I am saying is this: You must point your achievement toward a fairer distributive system in America. Abundance is here for the taking. Don't bemoan your lost frontier. It is even now flashing on your horizon. A gorgeous land lies before you fair and more beautiful than man before has ever known. Out of the laboratories will come new processes to multiply almost infinitely material things for your America — but only if you will hold

open the channels of free science, unfettered thought, and the right of a man to use his talents to the utmost, provided he gives honest social returns for the rewards he takes.

Don't delude yourselves about your new frontier. For on that frontier which will rise over the laboratories you will find the same struggle, the same hardships, the same inequities that your forefathers have found on every frontier since the beginning of time. But don't let that discourage you.

Finally, remember this: If you hang your horse thieves, if you jail your pirates of finance, and if you, indeed, make your new world worth while, it will be worth while not because of the material richness that the laboratories will bring you. All the regal wealth of this continent was here for countless centuries, before our English-speaking race came to develop the land. But they made it a noble civilization, not because of the fertile soil, the abundant mines, the illimitable forests, but because they, your forebears, transmuted into a livable approximate to a just society the physical blessings of nature — through the social forces that rise out of the humble virtues of man's heart: duty, tolerance, faith, and love. The American pioneers — your forefathers — institutionalized in American government, and somewhat in commerce, and certainly in their way of living, a neighborly consideration of the rights of others. They dedicated the products of our soil, the output of our mines, the wealth of our forests, to the establishment of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people, that the people may not perish from the earth.

Of course, it has not been perfect — this work of their hands. Injustices still cry out, and we who have been building this land for the last thirty years have little reason to be proud. And yet, our work was better, was lovelier, and remains today more just than the work of any other age in human history.

In closing let me say that your heritage is not in these great lovely cities, not this wide and fertile land, not the mountains full of undreamed-of riches. These you may find in other continents.

What we bequeath to you that is precious are the few simple virtues which have stood us in good stead in the struggle of our generation. We leave you our enthusiasm, our diligence, our zeal for a better world, that were the lodestars of our fathers. As our legatees we assign you our tolerance; our patience; our kindness; our faith, hope, and love — which make for the self-respect of man. These qualities of heart and mind grow out of a conviction that the democratic philosophy as a mode of thinking will lead mankind into a nobler way of life.

We are painfully conscious that this philosophy has worked imperfectly. But we ask what other philosophy has endowed the individual with so much dignity.

What other habit of thought has held a continent for a century and a half in unity, bound by reasoned self-interest and not by force?

### SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Mr. White attributes our success as a democracy to our "genius for unity." Discussing each separately, show what he means when he says that tolerance, patience, unselfishness, and a sense of duty are the sources and guarantees of this unity.

2. Name several conflicts which threaten the unity of the United States at present, as States' rights and slavery did in the past. Are the qualities enumerated in question 1 necessary for the solution of these conflicts? Prepare a talk or paper making this point about one of the conflicts you have named.

3. In a democracy what are the duties of a majority? of a minority? From your knowledge of American history cite cases in which a minority continued to agitate until it became a majority.

4. What fundamental American rights are you learning to appreciate as you learn about dictatorships of Europe? Why are you glad you live in a democracy? What can you as an individual do to help preserve the democratic way of life in America?

5. Write a short paper with the subject, "What Being an American Means to Me."

6. Vocabulary: stratification, alacrity, inequity, millennial, institutionalize, immunize, premise, plutocrats, proletarians, plausible, residuum, material, transmuted, lodestar, ukase, dialectics.

### For Your Vocabulary

7. An important element in a working democracy, according to Mr. White, is *altruism* (page 1199), the regard for, or devotion to, the interests of others. The stem of the word means "other," and is the basis of common words like *alternate* and *alternative*. The opposite of *altruism* is *egoism*, or excessive devotion to one's own interests. The stem of this word means "self." A similar word which has developed an interesting meaning of its own is *egotism*, extravagant self-regard, or sometimes overfrequent use of "I" in conversation or writing. An *egoist* who is thoroughly selfish is not necessarily an *egotist*. All three words have their adjective forms, *altruistic*, *egoistic*, and *egotistic*, which are used to describe both behavior and people.



## Chapter X

### CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE

(1914 TO THE PRESENT)

#### I. *Landmarks of the Age*

IF YOU had only a few hours to make a map of a large city which had never before been mapped, you would not spend the time walking from one corner to another, measuring the length and width of each street. You would go to some high point from which you could see a great part of the city. If an airplane were available, you might climb to a great height above the city and take a number of pictures. Upon developing and piecing together those pictures, you would have a map, or at least you would have materials from which you could easily make a map.

The value of perspective. A century of history has about the same effect as the airplane flight; it gives the historian *perspective*. It is much easier to write about the literature of the romantic movement than to write about the literature of today, because we are far enough away from the romantic movement to see it as a whole and pick out its landmarks. We have no such perspective on our own day. We are in the position of the man who must measure the streets in order to make his map. It will be many years before we are sure whether we are measuring main streets or some outlying alleys.

Three successive moods of our age. The preceding chapter has given you a picture of historical events and problems which have influenced the thinking and writing of our present age. We may say that there have been three successive moods or dispositions during the last quarter century. The first was a brief period of stimulation and emotion induced by the World War. High ideals of a better world to emerge from present sacrifice buoyed the spirits of the nation. The second was a period of about twenty years following the war, which might be summed up as the period of disillusionment. Tense muscles were relaxed and people began to wonder whether the exertion was worth while. Attention turned almost abruptly to money-making. It was the "jazz age" and the period of the "hard-boiled," sophisticated novel. There seemed no end to prosperity, no end to the ways in which men could expensively and often illicitly enjoy themselves. But there *was* an end. It came in 1929 with what we call the great depression. During the decade of the thirties a sobered America turned its attention to economics, social conditions, and problems of government. Literature took some surprising new turns. Now to-day we have still more reason to wonder what new world and what new literature will emerge out of war and depression in the coming years.

Why study recent literature? Our inability to tell just what the future will say about our present writers is no reason to avoid a study of today's literature. After all, it is written for us by people who are like us. We owe it to ourselves to find out what such writers as Sinclair Lewis and Carl Sandburg and Pearl Buck think, because they discuss our problems, and our future is bound to the solution of those problems. This alone would be a reason for studying recent writers; but, besides, their books are well written and entertaining. With the increasing number of writers and the constant competition to gain a hearing, it is evident that the workmanship on a book must be fairly good before it can reach the reading public in the first place.

## 2. *Following Up Earlier Currents*

The stream of literature is a constantly widening river fed by a succession of new movements, points of view, and types of subject matter. Nor do these new elements completely replace the old. Instead, old currents often continue along beside the new, though perhaps ir-



# CONTEMPORARY WRITERS

|                        |  |                          |                      |      |                   |            |              |
|------------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------|------|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| 1861 1865              |  |                          | 1900                 |      | 1914 1918         | 1929       | 1939         |
| War between the States |  |                          |                      |      | World War         | Depression | European War |
|                        |  |                          | 1898                 |      | 1912              |            |              |
|                        |  |                          | Spanish-American War |      | Revival of Poetry |            |              |
| 1862                   |  | Edith Wharton            |                      | 1937 |                   |            |              |
| 1868                   |  | William Allen White      |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1869                   |  | Edwin Arlington Robinson |                      | 1935 |                   |            |              |
| 1869                   |  | Booth Tarkington         |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1869                   |  | Edgar Lee Masters        |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1871                   |  | James Weldon Johnson     |                      | 1938 |                   |            |              |
| 1871                   |  | Theodore Dreiser         |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1874                   |  | Amy Lowell               |                      | 1925 |                   |            |              |
| 1874                   |  | Clarence Day             |                      | 1935 |                   |            |              |
| 1875                   |  | Robert Frost             |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1876                   |  | Sherwood Anderson        |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1876                   |  | Willa Cather             |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1878                   |  | Carl Sandburg            |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1879                   |  | Vachel Lindsay           |                      | 1931 |                   |            |              |
| 1885                   |  | Sinclair Lewis           |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1886                   |  | Elinor Wylie             |                      | 1928 |                   |            |              |
| 1886                   |  | Wilbur Daniel Steele     |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1887                   |  | Robinson Jeffers         |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1888                   |  | Eugene O'Neill           |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1890                   |  | Christopher Morley       |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1892                   |  | Archibald MacLeish       |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1892                   |  | Edna St. Vincent Millay  |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1892                   |  | Pearl Buck               |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1897                   |  | Thornton Wilder          |                      |      |                   |            |              |
| 1898                   |  | Stephen Vincent Benet    |                      |      |                   |            |              |
|                        |  | John Steinbeck           |                      |      |                   |            |              |

modified or blended form. In colonial days our literature was like the Mississippi River near its source in northern Minnesota — a little stream easily bridged. In the first half of the nineteenth century it resembled the Mississippi as it skirts southern Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa — a majestic river edged by imposing bluffs, romantic in its beauty. In the last half of the century it looked more like the Mississippi after some of its great tributaries draining east and west have poured into it. Our present literature, with its steady flow of books, is like that wide, bewildering stretch of water swirling southward, with its infinite detail of turns, shallows, and currents, which Mark Twain found so hard to learn. To help in the charting of this literature of today we find numerous critics, book-review columns, and literary magazines; but, even so, piloting is difficult and the main channels are not always recognized at once.

Let us see how the main currents described in Chapter VIII have fared since the World War. In that chapter we noted, as you remember, the geographical spread of regional literature, the beginning of realism which later intensified into naturalism, and the backwash of romanticism in the historical novel.

**Realism still dominant.** Today we find that realism is still the dominant point of view. In fact, if one were allowed just one word to describe the writing of the present century, *realistic* would do it more completely than any other word. But it does not tell the whole story. There are many kinds of realism. Some realists have followed the lead of Howells and James in telling the truth about everyday life, seeking to extract the essence of a character or situation without emphasizing the worst features. Willa Cather and Edith Wharton have been prominent members of this group. Others have carried on the naturalism initiated in the nineties, which may be characterized as "realism without a limit." Theodore Dreiser continues his uncompromising pictures of weak and disintegrating personality. Somewhat in the same vein is most of Sherwood Anderson's writing. The literature of social protest is carried on by writers like Upton Sinclair. He believes ardently in socialism and often lets the propagandist eclipse the artist in his work. In the novels of Sinclair Lewis realism runs into satire and caricature as he observes the stupidities and delusions of middle-class life. A group who were in the heyday of youth during the twenties — Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and John Dos Passos — represent rebellion against the manners and standards of conservative society. With the coming of the depression the cynics of the "jazz age" have given way to the writers who picture prole-

tarian miseries and economic confusions. In recent years John Steinbeck has been the greatest critic of the social order in fiction.

**Regional interest perpetuated.** The geographical spread of literature has continued until now there is scarcely a state in the Union that does not have its quota of literary spokesmen, many of whom have attained national as well as local reputation. Willa Cather, for instance, has pictured the pioneer days of Nebraska, but she has also gone far beyond that local interest. Much of the pioneer literature of today has been the attempt to preserve that great era before it has passed completely from the recollection of living men. O. E. Rölvaag did this for the Scandinavian settlements of the Northwest in *Giants in the Earth*, Edna Ferber for the Oklahoma trail in *Cimarron*; Laura Krey for Texas after the War between the States in *And Tell of Time*. With similar motives the folklore societies and individual enthusiasts have delved into the treasures of story and song hidden among mountain people, woodsmen, cowboys, and various racial groups. In the nineteenth century Joel Chandler Harris was almost alone in the field of folk literature. Now collections and commentaries on folklore are innumerable, and the name of a mythical hero like Paul Bunyan is as familiar as that of the real Daniel Boone.

**The South comes to the front.** During the past twenty years the South has staged a real revival. Stark Young, author of *So Red the Rose*, is leader of the writers who continue the tradition of Thomas Nelson Page in idealizing the society of days before the War between the States. This group is small, being outside the main current of realism. On the other side we find a grim picture of Georgia seen through the eyes of Erskine Caldwell; of Mississippi, as described by William Faulkner. Less depressing, but clearly realistic are Thomas Wolfe's novels of North Carolina and Julia Peterkin's portrayal of the Negroes of South Carolina. Florida is the territory of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings who, though a transplanted Northerner, has recorded with truth and understanding the lives of the poor whites of the interior. On the other side of the Mississippi J. Frank Dobie's tales of treasure hunts and the cattle industry, and Oliver La Farge's novels of the modern Indian have made the Southwest come alive through their faithful portrayals. The piece of Southern literature that has had the widest vogue in recent years is the superseller *Gone with the Wind* (1936) by Margaret Mitchell. This book illustrates not only regional literature but also the newer trends in historical fiction.

**The new treatment of historical fiction.** We have previously

discussed the historical romance at the beginning of the twentieth century — zestful in action but seldom penetrating in character analysis or deeply moving as a piece of human experience. But after the World War, which itself had resulted in a body of war literature emphasizing its horrors and brutalities, no one could write about any great struggle with the romantic fervor of an earlier day. In the twenties this deeper note in historical fiction had been struck by James Boyd in *Drums* (about the Revolution) and *Marching On* (about the War between the States). Then came Hervey Allen's *Anthony Adverse*, with less emphasis on history than on the adventurous wanderings of its hero. It proved the salability of an extremely long novel, contrary to previous supposition that Americans had time to read only short books. Further proof came when *Gone with the Wind*, with its thousand pages, sold more than a million copies during a depression. Here the terrific impact of invasion upon the life of a civilian population in the War between the States is described with no minced terms. The same year that this book appeared, early Northern history received attention in Walter Edmonds' *Drums along the Mohawk*, which showed the distressing situation of New York farmers during the Revolution. Even more powerful was Kenneth Roberts' *North-west Passage* (1938), a vivid presentation of frontier hardships during the French and Indian Wars. This book illustrates how far we have traveled from the frontier romances of James Fenimore Cooper, for its chief character, Robert Rogers, after being exalted to heroic proportion by his exploits in the wilderness, is reduced to ultimate degradation through character weaknesses that become evident only in civilized society. This is the modern mood of realism.

The three last-named novels have been recently given excellent presentations on the moving-picture screen. These films show the high artistic possibilities of a union among history, fiction, acting ability, and the pictorial arts.

### 3. *New Currents in the Widening Stream of Literature*

The long view reveals a few marked new trends in twentieth-century literature. It is evident that writers are more representative of all the different elements that make up our population; that the subject matter of literature is being influenced by new developments in economics, politics, and science; and that new techniques of writing and new emphases on certain types of literature have come to the front.

**Women writers gain eminence.** The long struggle of women

for educational opportunity during the nineteenth century has influenced twentieth-century literature. The roll call of nineteenth-century women authors of eminence is meager. Louisa Alcott was a writer of "juveniles." Harriet Beecher Stowe and Julia Ward Howe rode to fame on the tide of emotionalism involved in the antislavery movement. Several of the "local colorists" were women, but the only nineteenth-century woman to attain a reputation as a strong and sustained writer of fiction was Mary E. Wilkins Freeman; the only outstanding poet was Emily Dickinson. How different the story is today. In 1929 a vote was taken among thirty-two prominent critics as to the best living American novelists. The result showed two women at the very top — Edith Wharton and Willa Cather — while out of twenty-three names in the four highest classes, seven, or almost a third, were women. About the same proportion holds true among the poets chosen as most representative in the poetry section of this volume. The Pulitzer Prize has frequently been awarded to women in recent years, and of the three Americans to win the Nobel Prize in literature — Sinclair Lewis, Eugene O'Neill, and Pearl Buck — one is a woman. It is apparent that women now have a vital part to play in the creation of American literature.

**Literary recognition comes to the Negro.** With constantly improving education since their emancipation Negroes have shown that they have a gift for literary expression as well as for music. To native originality and imaginative quality they have now added mastery of standard English and power of organization. In the nineteenth century Paul Laurence Dunbar was about the only Negro poet who had attained recognition. In the twentieth century several anthologies of Negro verse bear witness to the dozens of talented Negro poets, among whom Sterling Brown, Countee Cullen, and Langston Hughes are distinctive. James Weldon Johnson was a leader, almost a prophet to his race. Besides vivid poetry, Johnson wrote interpretations, biographies, and his autobiography, all of which show clear insight into the problems and dreams of his people. His accidental death in 1938 was a genuine loss to the cause of furthering Negro culture. A rising young novelist and short-story writer, Richard Wright, whose style and intensity have been widely acclaimed, is indicative of the place that the Negro will increasingly take in American literature.

**New subjects to write about.** Americans have never had difficulty in finding new things to write about. All we needed to do was to look about us. Bryant found birds and flowers unknown to preceding English poets. Cooper found the Indian and the frontier a

fresh field. The "local colorists" viewed communities undreamed of in New England. The realists exposed slums and industrial conditions which were nonexistent in their own childhood. With the twentieth century new things have doubled and redoubled until we are bewildered by the variety of things we must know about to be "up to date." With our great interest in psychology and sociology much writing of today concerns how people get along together under new conditions. The problem of the immigrant, which occupied considerable literary attention before the World War, has now turned into the problem of the second or third generation during that difficult period of adjustment between the old and the new manner of living. This, of course, blends into the whole problem of interracial and international relationships within our own borders. There are the themes resulting from the depression — unemployment, labor unrest, rudderless youth, and others. All of these have been written about voluminously. Drama and fiction have braced themselves anew with such stirring subjects, notably in the plays of Clifford Odets and the novels of John Steinbeck. Then on top of our pressing internal problems came a new war in Europe, with its tragic and terrible implications for Americans.

Science, too, is just opening up new possibilities. So far, literature based on science (aside from technical scientific literature) has been largely biographical or descriptive, such as William Beebe's books and Paul de Kruif's accounts of advances in medicine. The epic qualities of towering skyscrapers and gigantic machinery have been touched on in poetry by Carl Sandburg. The poetic qualities of air flight have been caught in beautiful prose by Anne Lindbergh.

The poets rebel against tradition. About the happiest fusion of new subject matter with new technique is to be found in modern poetry. Literary production does not move on a flat and even line; it moves, rather, by spurts. There is a long quiet period when nothing of great importance is written; then comes a sudden revival when a dozen or more important authors appear at almost the same time. Such a revival in poetry occurred just preceding and during the World War; and, as a result, the poetry of our day speaks a different language from that of the earlier periods. Between 1912, when *Poetry*, a small magazine of verse, began its career under the editorship of Harriet Monroe, and 1917 there appeared important writings of seven of the major poets of our century — Robinson, Frost, Amy Lowell, Lindsay, Masters, Sandburg, and Edna St. Vincent Millay — perhaps the most brilliant five-year period in American poetry!

These new poets, like the modern prose writers, have been realists. They revolted against Victorian sentimentality, Puritanic moralizing, and the vague dreaming and trite diction of the romanticists. In the place of these they set up a "real" poetry, choosing their material from the life around them, and this new style has dominated our poetry ever since. Modern poets are keenly awake to the currents of the age — scientific knowledge, psychological methods, social problems, and so on. They feel that there is no subject unfit for poetry if the subject is considered in a truly poetical spirit. These poets, says Louis Untermeyer, himself a well-known poet, "have learned to distinguish real beauty from mere prettiness; to wring loveliness out of squalor; to find wonder in neglected places." He goes on to explain *how* they write.

With the use of the material of everyday life, there has come a further simplification: the use of the language of everyday speech. The stilted and mouth-filling phrases have been practically discarded in favor of words that are part of our daily vocabulary. It would be hard at present to find a representative poet employing such awkward and outworn abbreviations as *'twixt*, *'mongst*, *ope*; such evidences of poor padding as *adown*, *did go*, *doth smile*; such dull rubber stamps (*clichés* is the French term) as *heavenly blue*, *roseate glow*, *golden hopes*, *girlish grace*, *gentle breeze*, etc. The *peradventures*, *forsooths*, and *mayhaps* have disappeared. And as the speech of the modern poet has grown less elaborate, so have the patterns that embody it. Not necessarily discarding rhyme, regular rhythm, or any of the musical assets of the older poets, the forms have grown more flexible, the intricate versification has given way to simpler diction, direct vision, and lines that reflect and suggest the tones of animated or exalted speech. The result of this has been a great gain both in sincerity and intensity.

The formula for modern American poetry is everyday life seen by a poet's eye and described in the language of everyday speech which has been purified and strengthened. Of course, each poet has an individual interpretation of the formula.

**New emphases among the literary types.** Just as the stream of literature has broadened out to include more kinds of writers, a wider range of subject matter, and revised techniques, so, too, it has broadened in the number of literary types which call forth a high quality of writing. During the nineteenth century artistic creation was limited on the whole to poetry, fiction, and essay. Biography and drama of a sort were written; but typically the former was a stilted product for library shelves, and the latter a diluted concoction for the

footlights. But now biography and drama have stepped out from shelf and stage to take their place with other books on the table beside the reader's easy chair. Nonfiction often outruns fiction on the best-seller lists, and the general popularity of well-written history, economics, comment on public affairs, travel, and science is unquestioned.

What new forms of writing may emerge from the present experimenting in radio, sound pictures, and television it is hard to prophesy. Already the air resounds with radio dramas in serial form. Most of these are turned out by hack writers in steady mass production not unlike the manufacture of the products they advertise. Most of these serials play up sensationalism and have no literary value. Occasionally there emerges a piece of radio writing that has distinction. Sherwood Anderson's drama, *Textiles*, in this volume is suggestive of a new technique made possible by the radio — a poetic, interpretive drama, in which by the change and interplay of many voices the listener is made aware of great mass movements and the significance of events affecting the lives of multitudes. Among the poets Archibald MacLeish has done signal work in radio poetic drama with his *Fall of the City* and *Air Raid*. Even high-school students have produced some excellent radio writing. A remarkable program — *America Calling*, the original work of students in Miller Vocational High School, Minneapolis — has been broadcast over a national network and given permanent recording to make it available to schools. The possibilities in radio drama may become even more challenging as television develops. We have already witnessed in the past decade what remarkable improvement has been made in screen drama by sound synchronization. Perhaps future generations will look back to our day and point out that the mechanical devices of screen and radio have had as great an effect on the literature of their time as printing had upon that of the Middle Ages.

## SUMMARY

Twentieth-century literature is hard to judge as clearly as older literature because we are living too close to it and because it presents a greatly augmented stream of authors and books. This is a realistic age, and its moods have been decidedly affected by war, prosperity, and depression. Different writers have given realism a different twist — toward naturalism, toward satire, toward social protest, or toward cynicism. Regional literature continues to be widespread, but today



probes deeper below the surface. Collectors of folk-literature have been inspired by a desire to preserve frontier life before firsthand experience with it shall have passed away. Historical fiction has increased in power and has become closely linked with screen drama. Contemporary American literature has a larger proportion of women writers than any preceding period. Negroes have begun to make a significant contribution. The social and physical sciences have markedly influenced literature of all types, even poetry. In poetry, drama, and biography improved techniques provide a richer and more varied reading diet than ever before. New artistic maturity in radio and screen writing promise much for the future.

### IN THIS VOLUME

#### FICTION

- Booth Tarkington, "Henry the Great" (8)
- Richard Connell, "The Most Dangerous Game" (26)
- Sinclair Lewis, "Ring around a Rosy" (140)
- Wilbur Daniel Steele, "Footfalls" (159)
- Pearl Buck, "The Frill" (179)
- Ruth Suckow, "Midwestern Primitive" (190)
- John Steinbeck, "Flight" (207)
- Jesse Stuart, "The Split Cherry Tree" (225)
- Maureen Daly, "Sixteen" (238)

#### THE ESSAY AND OTHER NONFICTION

- Robert C. Benchley, "Sporting Life in America: Dozing" (255)
- Clarence Day, "Father and His Hard-Rocking Ship" (261)
- William Allen White, "Mary White" (299)
- William Beebe, "Almost Island" (304)
- J. Frank Dobie, "The Heraldry of the Range" (313)
- Christopher Morley, "The Century" (323)
- Paul de Kruif, "Walter Reed" (328)
- E. B. White, "How to Tell a Major Poet from a Minor Poet" (344)
- Anne Morrow Lindbergh, "If We Take Off at Night . . ." (349)

#### THE MAGAZINE IN AMERICA

- Henry S. Canby, "Magazines Are Human" (354)
- Three Book Reviews (358)

#### BIOGRAPHY

- M. R. Werner, "Barnum's American Museum" (372)
- Marquis James, "Sam Houston at San Jacinto" (384)

- Lincoln Steffens, "I Become a Reporter" (419)  
 Malvina Hoffman, "The Hall of Man" (429)  
 Dr. Arthur E. Hertzler, "Country Practice" (439)

## POETRY

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Edwin Arlington Robinson | Sara Teasdale           |
| Four poems (610-13)      | Six poems (666-68)      |
| Amy Lowell               | Elinor Wylie            |
| Three poems (615-19)     | Five poems (669-72)     |
| Robert Frost             | Edna St. Vincent Millay |
| Seven poems (621-31)     | Five poems (673-76)     |
| Edgar Lee Masters        | Louis Untermeyer        |
| Six poems (634-38)       | Three poems (678-79)    |
| Carl Sandburg            | Stephen Vincent Benét   |
| Nine poems (640-48)      | Two poems (680-87)      |
| Vachel Lindsay           | Robinson Jeffers        |
| Four poems (650-61)      | Two poems (688-90)      |
| James Weldon Johnson     | Archibald MacLeish      |
| "The Creation" (663)     | Two poems (691-92)      |

## DRAMA

- Eugene O'Neill, *Where the Cross Is Made* (729)  
 Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* (748)  
 Sherwood Anderson, *Textiles* (815)

## CHAPTER IX. WORLD WAR AND MODERN PROBLEMS

Nine selections by modern authors bearing on modern life

## SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why is it difficult to make final judgment on the literature of one's own age? Why is it foolish to ignore current literature for that reason? Name three landmarks of this century which have greatly affected both life and literature and show in what way they have altered the moods of literature. Make a list of pieces of literature you have read which you think reflect these three moods.
2. What different directions has modern realism taken in fiction? Name prominent authors illustrating each of these. What has been the status of regional literature during the present century? Name authors given in this chapter as illustrative of regional literature, and extend the list as far as you can by adding other examples from your reading.
3. How has the writing of historical fiction changed in recent years from that of the early part of the twentieth century? Give some good examples. Point out how historical fiction has influenced moving-picture productions. If you have seen any of the pictures mentioned in the chapter, discuss how

## 1216 CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LITERATURE

closely they followed the original book and what the use of technicolor added to the value of the picture.

4. Extend the list of women writers beyond that given in this chapter. In what types of literature does it seem that women do the best work? Can you account for the increase in the number of women writers?

5. Think of specific examples to illustrate the different kinds of new subject matter mentioned in the chapter. Which of these kinds of subjects appeal to you especially? How many of them do you find included in the reading list, "In This Volume," at the end of this chapter?

6. What changes have taken place in poetry, biography, and drama during recent years? Supplement what this chapter says about changes in types by reading the introductions to the different types in Part I. For each of the major types select from three to six names of authors whom you would consider outstanding writers in that type. Discuss your lists with other members of the class and with your teacher.

### GENERAL REFERENCE BOOKS ON AMERICAN LITERATURE

Cooper, F. T., *Some American Short Story Tellers*

Foerster, Norman, *American Criticism; Nature in American Literature; The Reinterpretation of American Literature*

Hazard, Lucy, *The Frontier in American Literature*

Lowell, Amy, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*

Macy, John, *The Spirit of American Literature*

Manly, J. M. and Rickert, Edith, *Contemporary American Literature*

Parrington, V. L., *Main Currents in American Thought*

Pattee, F. L., *The Development of the American Short Story; A History of American Literature since 1870; New American Literature; First Century of American Literature*

Perry, Bliss, *The American Spirit in Literature*

Phelps, W. L., *Some Makers of American Literature; Essays on Modern Dramatists; Essays on Modern Novelists*

Rusk, R. L., *The Literature of the Middle Western Frontier*

Smith, C. A., *Southern Literary Studies; What Can Literature Do for Me?*

Untermeyer, Louis, *American Poetry since 1900*

Van Doren, Carl, *The American Novel; The Contemporary American Novel; Many Minds*

Williams, B. C., *Our Short Story Writers*

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Houghton Mifflin Company: "A Lady," "Music," "Patterns" by Amy Lowell; "Plain Language from Truthful James" and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat" by Bret Harte; "The Fool's Prayer" and "Opportunity" by Edward Rowland Sill; selection from *The Promised Land* by Mary Antin; "Nocturne" and "It Is a Strange Thing—To Be an American" from *American Letter* by Archibald MacLeish; and "John Colter's Race for Life" from *Mountain Men* by Stanley Vestal.

Carolyn Wells Houghton: "Diversions of the Re-Echo Club."

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# Dictionary of Words, Names, and Phrases

This glossary contains pronunciations and definitions for the more important of the harder and comparatively unusual terms used in this book. For each word the definition is limited to the use of that word in this volume. For words with more than one accepted pronunciation, the most usual pronunciation is given. Words explained in vocabulary studies are printed in boldface with references to the pages where the studies appear.

The diacritical markings used are very simple: *āce*, *senāte*, *rāre*, *bāt*, *fāther*, *sofā*, *ēvent*, *ēven*, *ēnd*, *mothēr*, *fīnd*, *sīt*, *rōpe*, *ōmit*, *cōrd*, *hōt*, *ūnit*, *ūnite*, *būrn*, *cūt*, *bōōt*, *fōōt*, *thēn*, *thin*. Both main accent (´) and secondary accents (˘) are given.

In a few foreign words, only approximate pronunciation is achieved.

## A

- abalone** (āb'ā-lō'nē). A shellfish
- abeyance** (ā-bā'āns). Temporary inactivity; suspension
- abhor** (āb-hōr'). To detest; to hate; to regard with horror
- aboriginal** (āb-ō-rīj'ī-nāl). First; primitive; original; native
- abscond** (āb-skōnd'). To depart in secrecy; to steal away and hide
- abyss** (ā-bīs'). Bottomless gulf or pit
- academic** (āk'ā-dēm'īk). Pertaining to colleges or other institutions of higher learning
- academician** (ā-kād'ē-mīsh'ān). A member of an academy, or society for promoting science, art, or literature
- acquiesce** (āk'wī-ēs'). To consent, or rest satisfied
- acquisitive** (ā-kwīz'ī-tīv). Strongly desirous of acquiring and possessing
- actuate** (āk'tū-āt). To arouse, or move to action
- admonition** (ād'mō-nīsh'ūn). Gentle or friendly reproof; warning
- advert** (ād-vūrt'). P. 923
- Aeolian** (ē-ō'li-ān). Pertaining to the wind or Aeolus, god of the winds
- affable** (āf'ā-b'l). Easy to speak to; sociable
- affluence** (āf'lō-ēns). P. 614
- aggressive** (ā-grēs'īv). Self-assertive; taking the offensive; attacking
- agile** (āj'il). Quick and easy in moving
- alacrity** (ā-lāk'rī-tī). Cheerful quickness; briskness
- alleviate** (ā-lē-vī-āt). P. 343
- alliteration** (ā-līt'ēr-ā'shūn). Repetition of the same sound at the beginning of words near each other
- allopathic** (āl'ō-pāth'īk). Pertaining to allopathy, a system of medical practice
- altruism** (āl'trō-iz'm). P. 1203
- amain** (ā-mān'). With full force; at great speed
- ambiguity** (ām-bī-gū'ī-tī). Capability of being understood in either of two or more possible senses.
- Adj.*, **ambiguous** (ām-bīg'ū-ūs)
- amendment** (ā-mēnd'mēnt). A change for the better; improvement
- amenities** (ā-mēn'ī-tīz). Actions and attitudes that make for pleasant social intercourse
- amiable** (ā-mī-ā-b'l). Friendly; kindly; good-natured
- amicable** (ām'ī-kā-b'l). Peaceable; friendly

- amontillado (ä-môn'têl-yä'thò). A variety of sherry, a still wine
- amulet (äm'û-lèt). An ornament worn as a charm
- anachronistic** (ä-näk'rò-nis'tik). P. 312
- anathema (ä-näth'é-mä). A curse
- anesthetic (än'ês-thêt'ik). An agent that produces loss of feeling or sensation
- animosity (än'î-môs'î-ti). Hostility; enmity
- anodyne (än'ô-dîn). Any medicine that relieves pain
- anonymous (ä-nôn'î-müs). Giving no name; of unknown authorship
- antennae (än-tên'ê). Movable feelers on the head of an insect or shellfish
- anthology (än-thöl'ô-jî). A collection into one volume of fine passages by many authors
- anthropoidal** (än'thrô-poi'däl). P. 1188
- anthropology** (än'thrô-pôl'ô-jî). P. 1188
- antimacassar (än'tî-mä-käs'ër). A cover to protect the back or arms of a chair
- antipathy** (än-tîp'ä-thî). P. 85
- apathetically** (äp'ä-thêt'î-käl'î). P. 85
- aphid (ä'fid). A small insect that lives on plants and sucks their juices
- apparition (äp'ä-rîsh'ün). A ghost; specter; phantom
- appease (ä-péz'). To pacify, often by satisfying; to soothe or calm
- appellation (äp'ê-lä'shün). Name; title
- appendage (ä-pên'dîj). Something hung on or added to; an external organ or limb
- appraise (ä-präz'). To set a value on
- apprehensive** (äp'rê-hên'siv). P. 1129
- appropriate (ä-prô'pri-ät). To take exclusive possession of
- approximate (ä-prök'sî-mät). To come near to
- aquiline (äk'wî-lîn). P. 747
- arabesque (är'ä-besk'). A fanciful ornament
- arbitrament (är-bît'rä-mënt). Authoritative decision
- Archeozoic (är'kê-ô-zô'ik). Pertaining to the earliest era of geological history
- ardent (är'dënt). Glowing; warm; eager
- arduous (är'dû-üs). Difficult; laborious
- argument (är'gû-mënt). Evidence; reason for believing
- arraign (ä-rän'). To accuse; denounce
- arrogance (är'ô-gäns). Overbearing pride; insolence
- articulate (är-tik'û-lât). Uttered with distinctness
- artifice (är'tî-fis). An artful stratagem or trick
- artisan (är'tî-zän). One trained in some mechanic art or trade
- ascendancy (ä-sên'dän-sî). Controlling influence; domination
- ascription (äs-krip'shün). The ascribing of a cause
- askew (ä-skû'). Set or turned to one side
- assiduous (ä-sîd'û-üs). Performed with care and close attention
- atheistical (ä'thê-îs'tî-käl). Denying the existence of God
- atrocious (ä-trô'shüs). Savagely cruel or brutal; very bad, abominable (colloquial). *Noun*, atrocity (ä-trôs'î-tî)
- atrophy (ät'rô-fî). To waste away from want of nourishment
- attribute (ät'rî-bût). A quality or characteristic firmly associated with a person, state, or thing
- attrition (ä-trîsh'ün). State of being worn down
- audacity (ô-däs'î-tî). Daring; boldness. *Adj.*, audacious (ô-dä'shüs)
- augmented (ôg-mên'têd). Increased
- august (ô-güst'). Possessing stately grandeur; exalted
- auroral (ô-rô'räl). Rosy; radiant; pertaining to the dawn

**auspicious** (ôs-pîsh'ûs). P. 1083  
**austere** (ôs-têr'). Harsh; hard;  
 strict  
**autonomous** (ô-tôn'ô-mûs). Self-  
 governing  
**avarice** (âv'â-rîs). Greediness for  
 wealth  
**aversion** (â-vûr'zhûn). Dislike; dis-  
 gust; act of turning away  
**avert** (â-vûrt'). To turn aside or  
 away; to ward off or prevent  
**avid** (âv'id). Keenly eager, as for  
 food or gain; greedy. *Noun*,  
 avidity (â-vid'i-tî)  
**awful** (ô'fûl). Filling with awe;  
 profoundly impressive

**B**

**bailiwick** (bâl'f-wîk). One's special  
 province or domain  
**baileful** (bâl'fûl). Evil and damag-  
 ing in influence  
**balsam** (bôl'sâm). Anything that  
 heals, soothes, or restores  
**baneful** (bân'fûl). Producing ruin  
 or woe; very harmful  
**baronial** (bâ-rô'nî-âl). Befitting a  
 baron or nobleman  
**barouche** (bâ-rôûsh'). A four-  
 wheeled carriage with a driver's  
 seat in front, two double seats  
 inside, and a folding top over the  
 back seat  
**bayou** (bî'ôo). A slow, stagnant  
 stream  
**beams and carlines** (bêmz, car'lînz).  
 Main supporting timbers for the  
 deck of a ship  
**belay** (bê-lâ'). To make fast or stop  
 by winding a rope around a pin or  
 cleat in order to hold secure  
**beleaguered** (bê-lê'gêrd). Sur-  
 rounded or shut in by an armed  
 force  
**bellicose** (bêl'i-kôs). P. 113  
**belligerent** (bê-lîj'êr-ênt). Engaged  
 in warfare  
**beneficent** (bê-nêf'i-sênt). Doing or  
 producing good  
**beneficiary** (bên'ê-nîsh'i-êr-î). One

who receives a benefit or advan-  
 tage  
**benign** (bê-nîn'). Gracious; gentle;  
 kindly  
**bestead** (bê-stêd'). Put in peril  
**bias** (bî'âs). A tendency; preju-  
 dice  
**binnacle** (bîn'â-k'l). A case, box, or  
 stand containing a ship's compass,  
 and a lamp for use at night  
**bizarre** (bî-zar'). Odd; extravagant  
**blanch** (blânch). To make white,  
 or become white  
**bland** (blând). Smooth and sooth-  
 ing in manner; gentle  
**blatant** (blâ'tânt). P. 662  
**blaze** (blâz). To mark a tree by  
 chipping off a piece of bark  
**blear** (blêr). To make sore or  
 watery; to dim  
**blench** (blênc). To shrink back;  
 turn pale  
**bonanza** (bô-nân'zâ). A rich ore  
 pocket; hence, a source of quick  
 riches  
**boodle** (bôo'd'l). Quick, easy money;  
 graft  
**boreal** (bô'rê-âl). Pertaining to  
 Boreas, the north wind; hence to  
 the north generally  
**bourgeois** (bôor-zhwâ'). P. 357  
**bow** (bou). The forward part of a  
 ship  
**brachycephalic** (brâk'i-sê-fâl'îk).  
 Short-headed, or broad-headed  
**bracken** (brâk'ên). Any large coarse  
 fern  
**Brahmin** (bra'mîn). A member of  
 one of the four upper castes or  
 classes in India  
**brazier** (brâ'zhêr). A pan for hold-  
 ing burning coals  
**brocade** (brô-kâd'). A fabric with a  
 raised design  
**buccaneer** (bûk'â-nêr'). A pirate  
**buntline** (bunt'îin). One of the  
 ropes attached to the foot of a  
 square sail, to haul the sail up to  
 the yard for furling  
**buoyant** (bôo'yânt). P. 396  
**buttress** (bût'rês). To support

## C

cabal (kā-bāl'). A number of persons united in some secret design  
cabalistic (kāb'ā-lis'tik). Secret; mysterious

cache (kāsh). A hole in the ground or a hiding-place, especially one used by explorers for concealing and preserving provisions or implements which it is inconvenient to carry; also, to store supplies in such a manner

cadaver (kā-dāv'ēr). A dead body, especially a human one

calaboose (kā'lā-boōs). A prison, jail  
calumnious (kā-lūm'nī-ūs). Slandering

candor (kān'dēr). Frankness

canine (kā'nin). Pertaining to the dog

canny (kān'i). Shrewd; thrifty

cantina (kān-tē'nā). A container attached to a saddle

Canuck (kā-nūk'). Slang term for a Canadian

capitulation (kā-pit'ū-lā'shūn). A surrender upon terms agreed to

caricature (kā'rī-kā-tūr). P. 158

carnage (kā'r'nij). Great destruction of life

carnivorous (kā-r-niv'ō-rūs). Feeding upon the flesh of animals

carion (kā'r'i-ūn). Dead or decaying flesh

caste (kāst). A rigid division or class of society, such as is found in India

catacomb (kā'tā-kōm). A subterranean cemetery consisting of passages and galleries with side recesses for tombs

category (kā't'ē-gō'rī). A class or division formed for the purposes of a given discussion or classification

Cathay (kā-thā'). Ancient name for China

catholic (kāth'ō-lik). Universal or general; affecting mankind as a whole

cavalcade (kāv'āl-kād'). A com-

pany of persons on the march; a parade

celerity (sē-lēr'i-ti). Rapidity of motion; speed

celestial (sē-lēs'chāl). Heavenly; divine

celibacy (sēl'i-bā-si). State of being unmarried; single life, especially that of one bound by vows not to marry

censer (sēn'sēr). A vessel for burning perfume or incense

ensorious (sēn-sō'ri-ūs). Severe in making remarks on others, or on their writings or manners

chaff (chāf). The husks of grain separated from the seed by threshing

chancery (chān'sēr-i). A state of control by the courts pending legal settlement

chanticler (chān'ti-klēr). A rooster

chaparral (chāp'ā-rāl'). A dense thicket of stiff or thorny shrubs or dwarf trees

chasten (chās'n). To correct by punishment

chattel (chāt'l). Property; goods; money

cherub (chēr'ūb). An angel, usually represented as a child; pl., cherubim (chēr'ū-bim)

chilblain (chil'blān). Itching sore or bruise caused by exposure of the hands or feet to cold

cholera (kōl'ēr-ā). An Asiatic disease

chronic (krōn'ik). Constant; of long duration

chronological (krōn'ō-lōj'i-kāl). According to the order of time

chronometer (krō-nōm'ē-tēr). An instrument for measuring time

churlish (chūr'līsh). Rough; sullen; ungracious

cipher (sī'fēr). The figure for zero; hence, a person of no importance

circuitous (sēr-kū'i-tūs). Roundabout; indirect

cistern (sīs'tērñ). An underground reservoir

citadel (sīt'ā-děl). A fortress; stronghold  
 clemency (klēm'ēn-sī). Disposition to be merciful, or mild  
 clique (klēk). A small and exclusive set of persons  
 clown (kloun). A rustic person  
 cogitation (kōj'ī-tā'shūn). Act of thinking or reflecting  
 colleague (kōl'ēg). An associate in a profession or employment  
 colloquial (kōl-lō'kwī-āl). P. 103  
 colossal (kō-lōs'āl). Huge; tremendous  
 colter (kōl'tēr). A cutter on a plow  
 coma (kō'mā). A state of profound insensibility  
 comity (kōm'ī-tī). Courtesy; consideration; friendliness  
 commensurability (kō-mēn'shōō-rā-bīl'ī-tī). State of being reducible to a common measure  
 commiseration (kō-mīz'ēr-ā'shūn). Sorrow, or expressions of sympathy, for the wants or distresses of another  
 commissary (kōm'ī-sēr'ī). Those charged with furnishing food and necessary supplies for an army  
 companionway (kōm-pān'yūn-wā'). A set of steps leading from the deck of a ship to a cabin or saloon below  
 concentric (kōn-sēn'trīk). Having a common center  
 concert (kōn'sūrt). Unity of opinion  
 concoct (kōn-kōkt'). To compose or make up, as a plan or intrigue  
 condone (kōn-dōn'). To pardon; overlook  
 configuration (kōn-fīg'ū-rā'shūn). Form; shape  
 conflagration (kōn-flā-grā'shūn). A large and destructive fire  
 conglomerate (kōn-glōm'ēr-īt). Made up of parts collected from various sources  
 conjecture (kōn-jēk'tūr). A supposition; guess  
 conjugal (kōn'jōō-gāl). Of or pertaining to marriage

connoisseur (kōn'ī-sūr'). P. 92  
 connotation (kōn'ō-tā'shūn). The suggestive significance of a word, apart from its explicit meaning  
 conquistador (kōn-kwīs'tā-dōr). A conqueror, especially one of the leaders in the Spanish conquest of America  
 consanguinity (kōn'sāng-gwīn'ī-tī). P. 916  
 consignment (kōn-sīn'mēnt). A quantity of goods turned over to an agent for shipment or sale  
 constraint (kōn-strānt'). P. 123  
 consulate (kōn'sū-lāt). The premises occupied by a consul, an official caring for commercial interests of his countrymen in a foreign land  
 consummation (kōn'sū-mā'shūn). Completion; complete achievement  
 contention (kōn-tēn'shūn). A contest; strife; a point maintained in an argument  
 contingency (kōn-tīn'jēn-sī). A possibility; something that is liable but not certain to occur  
 copse (kōps). A thicket or grove of small trees  
 cordial (kōr'jāl). A fragrant, sweetened alcoholic beverage  
 cosmopolite (kōz-mōp'ō-līt). A person at home in any country; without local prejudices  
 cosmos (kōz'mōs). The universe considered as a system  
 coterie (kōt'ēr-ī). A group of persons who meet familiarly, as for social purposes  
 covert (kūv'ert). Hidden, secret  
 craven (krā'vēn). A confessed coward  
 credence (krē'dēns). Belief; confidence based upon other than personal knowledge  
 cringe (krīnj). To draw back or shrink, especially in fear or base humility  
 crucial (krōō'shāl). P. 1083  
 crypt (krīpt). A vault partly or wholly underground

cryptic (krĭp'tĭk). Hidden; mysterious  
 crystalline (krĭs'tāl'ĭn). Resembling crystal; shiningly clear  
 cubit (kū'bit). An ancient measure of length, usually from the tips of the fingers to the elbow  
 culmination (kūl'mĭ-nā'shŭn). The highest point; the act of reaching that point  
 cult mongers (kŭlt mŭng'gĕrz). People devoted to spreading intellectual fads  
 cumbrous (kŭm'brŭs). Burdensome  
 curative (kūr'à-tĭv). P. 343  
 cut (kŭt). To separate an animal from the main cattle roundup herd for special grouping  
 cynic (sĭn'ĭk). P. 303

## D

dank (dǎngk). Cold and moist  
 debacle (dĕ-bā'k'l). A sudden breakdown; collapse  
 decorum (dĕ-kō'rŭm). Propriety; "good form"  
 decrepit (dĕ-krĕp'ĭt). Broken down with age, worn out  
 defalcation (dĕ'fāl-kā'shŭn). A misappropriation of money by one who has it in trust  
 defection (dĕ-fĕk'shŭn). Failure; loss; imperfection, defect  
 defective (dĕ-fĕk'tĭv). A person lacking in some respect, usually intelligence  
 deference (dĕ'fĕr-ĕns). Courteous regard for another's wishes  
 degenerate (dĕ-jĕn'ĕr-ĭt). Degraded; lowered in quality  
 deification (dĕ'ĭ-fĭ-kā'shŭn). The procedure of making a god of, or treating as a god  
 delectable (dĕ-lĕk'tā-b'l). Highly pleasing; delightful  
 delineate (dĕ-lĭn'ĕ-āt). To represent by a sketch or diagram; hence, to give an accurate idea of  
 delirium (dĕ-lĭr'ĭ-ŭm). A temporary state of mental disturbance

deluge (dĕl'ŭj). A flood  
 demean (dĕ-mĕn'). To lower; debase  
 demoniac (dĕ-mō'nĭ-āk). P. 293  
 denim (dĕn'ĭm). A coarse cotton cloth used for overalls  
 denizen (dĕn'ĭ-zĕn). Inhabitant  
 denominate (dĕ-nōm'ĭ-nāt). P. 322  
 denunciation (dĕ-nŭn'sĭ-ā'shŭn). Open condemnation  
 deplete (dĕ-plĕt'). To empty, or exhaust  
 deprecate (dĕp'rĕ-kāt). To express disapproval of  
 deranged (dĕ-rānjd'). Disordered; insane  
 derelict (dĕr'ĕ-lĭkt). A person or thing abandoned  
 dereliction (dĕr'ĕ-lĭk'shŭn). A failure in duty; shortcoming  
 Derringer (dĕr'ĭn-jĕr). A short-barreled pocket pistol of large caliber  
 desecrate (dĕs'ĕ-krāt). To violate the sanctity of; profane  
 devastate (dĕv'ās-tāt). To lay waste, ravage  
 Devonian basalt (dĕ-vō'nĭ-ān bā-sōlt'). Geological term for a kind of igneous rock formed in prehistoric times  
 dexterous (dĕk'stĕr-ŭs). P. 274  
 diabolical (dĭ'ā-bōl'ĭ-kāl). P. 293  
 diadem (dĭ'ā-dĕm). A crown  
 diagnosis (dĭ'āg-nō'sĭs). The act or art of recognizing a disease from its symptoms  
 diapason (dĭ'ā-pā'zŭn). The full range of a musical instrument  
 didactic (dĭ-dāk'tĭk). Instructive, designed to teach a lesson  
 diffuse (dĭ-fūz'). To scatter; spread  
 dignitary (dĭg'nĭ-tĕr'ĭ). One holding a position of dignity or honor  
 digression (dĭ-grĕsh'ŭn). A departure from the main course or path  
 dilemma (dĭ-lĕm'ā). A state in which evils or obstacles present themselves on every side and it is difficult to choose the best course

dilettante (dīl'ě-tăn'tī). One who follows an art or a branch of knowledge superficially

disconsolate (dis-kōn'sō-līt). Deeply dejected; sad; cheerless

discordant (dis-kōr'dānt). P. 988

discountenance (dis-koun'tē-nāns).

To discourage by disapproval

disinterested (dis-in'tēr-ěs-těd). Not

influenced by selfish motives

dissimulation (dī-sīm'ū-lā'shūn).

False pretension; hypocrisy

distaff (dīs'tāf). The staff for hold-

ing the fiber in spinning

distillage (dis-tīl'āj). The product of

distillation; hence, strong liquor

diverge (dī-vūrj'). To go out in

different directions; to vary

divest (dī-věst'). To unclothe;

to strip

docile (dōs'īl). Easy to manage.

*Noun*, docility (dō-sīl'ī-tī)

dogie (dō'gī). A motherless calf in

a range herd

dogmatical (dōg-măt'ī-kāl). P. 888

dole (dōl). Woe; grief

domicile (dōm'ī-sīl). A dwelling-

place

dominant (dōm'ī-nānt). P. 418

dragoon (drā-gōōn'). A cavalryman

drollery (drōl'ēr-ī). A comic en-

tertainment; jest

drover (drō'vēr). A dealer in cattle

or other domestic animals

dualism (dū'āl-īz'm). State of hav-

ing a double nature

ductile (dūk'tīl). Capable of being

drawn into wire or thread

duenna (dū-ēn'ā). An older or

married woman who is employed

to guard a younger one

dungaree (dūng'gā-rē'). A coarse

cotton fabric

dispeptic (dis-pēp'tīk). One who

suffers from disorders of digestion

overmastering feeling, especially

joy. *Noun*, ecstasy (ěk'stā-sī)

edelweiss (ā'děl-vis). A small flower

growing in the Alps

edible (ěd'ī-b'l). Fit to be eaten as

food

effuse (ě-fūz'). To pour forth; to

shed

egress (ě-grēs). A place or means of

exit; an outlet

El Dorado (ěl dō-rā'dō). Any place

rich in gold

elude (ěl-lūd'). To avoid or escape

cleverly

emaciated (ě-mā'shī-āt-ěd). Very

thin from loss of flesh

emanate (ěm'ā-nāt). To issue from

a source

embellish (ěm-běl'īsh). To adorn;

beautify

embryo (ěm'brī-ō). A beginning or

undeveloped stage of anything

emolument (ě-mōl'ū-měnt). Salary

or fee

encumber (ěn-kūm'bēr). To place

a burden upon, making action

difficult

engrossed (ěn-grōst'). Absorbed;

fully occupied

enigma (ě-nīg'mā). Something per-

plexing, hard to get the meaning

of

enrapture (ěn-rāp'tūr). To delight

beyond measure

ensign (ěn'sīn). Flag

enthrall (ěn-thrōl'). To charm or

captive; to hold spellbound

epic (ěp'īk). Great; courageous;

heroic

epicure (ěp'ī-kūr). One of exacting

taste in food and drink

epithet (ěp'ī-thět). Phrase or word

aptly describing some quality or

person

epitomize (ě-pīt'ō-mīz). P. 1057

equanimity (ě'kwā-nīm'ī-tī). P. 113

equinox (ě'kwī-nōks). The time

when the sun's center crosses the

equator and night and day are

everywhere of equal length

equipoise (ě'kwī-poiz). Balance

# E

ebullient (ě-būl'ī-ěnt). P. 363

eccentricity (ěk'sěn-trīs'ī-tī). P. 259

ecstatic (ěk-stăt'īk). In a state of



equitable (ĕk'wĭ-tă-b'l). Impartial; fair  
 equity (ĕk'wĭ-tĭ). State or quality of being fair; fairness in dealing  
**eradicate** (ĕ-răd'ĭ-kăt). P. 888  
 esoteric (ĕs'ô-tĕr'ĭk). Confined to a select group; belonging only to the inner circle  
**Esperanto** (ĕs'pĕ-răn'tô). An artificial international language  
 essence (ĕs'ĕns). The important elements or features of a thing; distinctive nature  
 estrangement (ĕs-trăn'jĕnt). A turning away in feelings or affection  
 estuary (ĕs'tû-ĕr-ĭ). An arm of the sea at the mouth of a river  
 ethics (ĕth'ĭks). Moral principles  
 euchre (û'kĕr). A card game  
**eugenics** (û-jĕn'ĭks). P. 437  
 euphony (û'fô-nĭ). Pleasing, harmonious sound  
 evanescent (ĕv'ă-nĕs'ĕnt). Tending to vanish or pass away like vapor; fleeting  
**excruciating** (ĕks-krŭō'shĭ-ăt'ĭng). P. 138  
**exhilarating** (ĕg-zĭl'ă-răt'ĭng). P. 306  
 exigencies (ĕk'sĭ-gĕn-sĭz). The special needs or requirements of a situation or occasion  
 exorbitant (ĕg-zôr'bĭ-tănt). Exceeding usual or accepted bounds; excessive  
 expatriate (ĕks-pă'trĭ-ăt). To banish; to drive or force a person from his own country  
**expedient** (ĕks-pĕ'dĭ-ĕnt). P. 927  
 expletive (ĕks'plĕ-tĭv). An oath or exclamation  
 explicit (ĕks-plĭs'ĭt). Distinctly stated; clear  
 expostulation (ĕks-pôs'tû-lă'shŭn). Earnest and kindly protest  
 extemporize (ĕks-tĕm'pô-rĭz). To compose or make on the spur of the moment, without previous planning  
 extenuate (ĕks-tĕn'û-ăt). To excuse; to represent as less serious

**exterminate** (ĕks-tŭr'mĭ-năt). P. 71  
 exuberance (ĕgz-û'hĕr-ăns). Unlimited supply of energy and life

## F

**façade** (fă-săd'). The face of a building  
 facetious (fă-sĕ'shŭs). Witty; humorous  
 facilitate (fă-sĭl'ĭ-tăt). To make more easy; free from hindrance  
 faculty (făk'ŭl-tĭ). Any one power of the mind  
**fallacious** (fă-lă'shŭs). P. 913  
 fantastic (făn-tăs'tĭk). Imaginary; unreal; hard to believe  
 fastidious (făs-tĭd'ĭ-ŭs). Hard to please; overnice; squeamish  
 fathomless (făth'ŭm-lĕs). Immeasurable  
 fatuous (făť'ŭ-ŭs). Foolish, especially in being pleased with oneself  
 fauna and flora (fô'nă, flô'ră). Animal life and plant life  
 feign (făn). To pretend  
 feint (fânt). A false appearance; a pretense  
 felicity (fĕ-lĭs'ĭ-tĭ). Well-founded happiness; complete comfort  
 felonious (fĕ-lô'nĭ-ŭs). Criminal; malicious; villainous  
**fervid** (fŭr'vĭd). P. 506  
 fiacre (fĕ-ă'kĕr). A small French hackney coach  
 filament. (fil'ă-mĕnt). A thread, or slender, threadlike object  
 filigrain (fil'ĭ-grăn). Ornamental openwork of intricate design in metal; filigree  
 fillip (fil'ĭp). Something serving to excite or arouse  
 flamboyant (flăm-boi'ănt). Flame-like in color; resplendent  
 flat (flăt). A level stretch of land  
 flotsam (flôt'săm). Anything drifting about on the surface of water  
 fodder (fôd'ĕr). Coarse food for cattle, horses, and sheep

foppery (fōp'ēr-ī). Foolish and extravagant concern with dress  
 foray (fōr'ā). A raid  
 forecastle (fōr'kās'l). The forward part of a merchant ship, where the sailors are quartered  
 forspent (fōr-spēnt'). Wasted in strength; exhausted  
 fortitude (fōr'ti-tūd). Courageous endurance  
 fossilized (fōs'ī-līzd). Turned into stone; unchanging; out of date  
 fowler (foul'ēr). One occupied in hunting wild fowl  
 fratricidal (frāt'ri-sī'dāl). Involving the murder of one's own brother  
 freebooter (frē'bōōt'ēr). A pirate  
 fresco (frēs'kō). A painting or decoration applied directly to a wall  
 frond (frōnd). A leaf, usually a large one with stem and foliage not easily distinguished  
 frugality (frōō-gāl'tī-tī). Thrift; economy in management of resources  
 frustrate (frūs'trāt). To prevent from attaining a purpose  
 furl (fūrl). To wrap or roll, as a flag or a sail  
 furlong (fūr'lōng). A measure of length, now one-eighth of a mile  
 furtive (fūr'tiv). Sly  
 futile (fū'til). Useless; to no avail

## G

galley (gāl'ī). The kitchen and cooking apparatus of a ship  
 gargoyle (gār'goil). P. 158  
 genealogist (jēn'ē-āl'ō-jist). P. 437  
 Gethsemane (gēth-sēm'a-nē). A garden near Jerusalem, where Christ endured his agony and was betrayed; hence, any place or occasion of great mental or physical suffering  
 ghoulish (gōōl). An evil spirit supposed to prey on dead human bodies  
 glade (glād). A grassy open or cleared space in a forest

glib (glīb). Easy, smooth in action, manner, or speech  
 gorse (gōrs). A spiny, evergreen shrub, common in Europe  
 gossamer (gōs'ā-mēr). A single thread of spider silk, or a filmy tangle of such threads; hence, a gauzelike fabric  
 grackle (grāk'l). Any of certain American blackbirds with glossy plumage, which have a harsh call  
 grandiose (grān'di-ōs). Impressive; grand; pompous  
 gratuitous (grā-tū'ī-tūs). Given freely, regardless of merit; unwarranted  
 groined (groind). Built so as to form intersected arches  
 guerrilla (gē-rīl'ā). Acting in an independent, irregular manner, as in guerrilla warfare  
 guile (gil). Crafty or deceitful cunning; treachery  
 gullible (gūl'ī-b'l). Easily misled; tending to believe everything told one  
 guttural (gūt'ēr-āl). P. 988

## H

harangue (hā-rāng'). To make a speech in a noisy, ranting manner  
 harass (hār'ās). To disturb or torment continuously; to wear out with worry  
 harpsichord (hārp'sī-kōrd). An old-fashioned stringed instrument, forerunner of the piano  
 harpy (hār'pī). A winged monster, with the head and body of a woman and the feet of a bird  
 hectic (hēk'tik). P. 506  
 heraldry (hēr'ald-ri). The art and science of representing family history by coats of arms  
 hieroglyphic (hī'ēr-ō-glīf'ik). A character in ancient picture writings such as the Egyptians' and Mexicans'; hence, an obscure or unintelligible symbol  
 hoary (hōr'ī). White with age

hobgoblin (hōb'gōb'lin). Any imaginary cause of terror or dread

homogeneous (hō'mō-jē'nē-ūs). P. 437

hove to (hōv). Of ships, stopped by bringing the head of the vessel into the wind and setting the sails to act against one another

hull (hūl). The frame or body of a ship

hyperbole (hī-pūr'bō-lē). A statement exaggerated for effect

hypnotic (hip-nōt'ic). Inducing sleep; tending to bring one completely under the influence of another, as in hypnosis

hypothesis (hī-pōth'ē-sīs). Something assumed or conceded merely for the purposes of argument or action

hysteria (his-tēr'ī-ā). Any outbreak of wild emotionalism

## I

idiom (id'ī-ūm). The language peculiar to a group of people or a community

idiosyncrasy (id'ī-ō-sing'krā-sī). P. 259

ignified (ig'nī-fid). Set on fire

ignominious (ig'nō-mīn'ī-ūs). Dishonorable; shameful; disgraceful illicitly (il-lis'it-lī). In an improper or unlawful manner

illimitable (il-lim'it-ā-b'l). Boundless

inmedicable (im-mēd'ī-kā-b'l). Incurable

immemorial (im-mē-mō'rī-āl). Older than memory can reach

immersion (ī-mūr'shūn). The act of plunging something completely under water

imminent (im'ī-nēnt). Threatening to occur immediately

immitigable (ī-mīt'ī-gā-b'l). P. 859

immolation (im-ō-lā'shūn). Act or

state of being sacrificed

immunize (im'ū-nīz). To exempt from, or protect completely against

impairment (īm-pâr'mēnt). Injury; decline in quality

impalpable (īm-pāl'pā-b'l). P. 45

impassive (īm-pās'iv). P. 123

impediment (īm-pēd'ī-mēnt). That which obstructs or hinders

impedimenta (īm-pēd'ī-mēn'tā). The supplies and supply train of an army

imperceptible (īm-pēr-sēp'it-b'l). Not capable of being noticed by the senses; extremely slight

imperturbable (īm-pēr-tūr'bā-b'l). P. 123

impervious (īm-pūr'vī-ūs). Incapable of being penetrated

implicit (īm-plis'it). Understood or implied, rather than stated

imponderable (īm-pōn'dēr-ā-b'l). P. 1164

import (īm'pōrt). Meaning; importance

imposture (īm-pōs'tūr). Deception by false pretenses

impotence (īm'pō-tēns). P. 178

impregnable (īm-prēg'nā-b'l). Incapable of being captured; unconquerable

impregnate (īm-prēg'nāt). To render fruitful or fertile

impunity (īm-pū'nī-tī). Freedom from punishment

inaccessible (in-āk-sēs'ī-b'l). Not to be reached; inapproachable

inalienable (in-āl'yēn-ā-b'l). Not transferable; not to be taken away

inaugurate (in-ō'gū-rāt). To commence or begin; to set in motion

incarnate (in-kār'nāt). P. 1057

incensed (in-sēnst'). Inflamed with anger

incessantly (in-sēs'ānt-lī). Without stopping or pausing

incisive (in-sī'siv). Having the quality of cutting; hence, sharp; acute; biting

inclement (in-klēm'ēnt). Harsh; severe; of weather, stormy

incompatible (in'kōm-pāt'ī-b'l). Incapable of harmonious association because of contradictions in nature

**incongruity** (in'kōn-grōō'ī-tī). That which is out of harmony, unsuitable, or inconsistent  
**incontrovertible** (in'kōn-trō-vūr'tī-b'l). Not to be denied or disputed  
**incorrigible** (in-kōr'ī-jī-b'l). P. 888  
**incredulous** (in-krēd'ū-lūs). Not believing; withholding belief  
**indefatigable** (in'dē-fāt'ī-gā-b'l). Incapable of being fatigued; untiring  
**indigence** (in'dī-jēns). P. 614  
**indigenous** (in-dij'ē-nūs). P. 437  
**indispensable** (in'dis-pēn'sā-b'l). Essential; not to be done without  
**indomitable** (in-dōm'ī-tā-b'l). P. 418  
**indubitable** (in-dū'bī-tā-b'l). Not to be doubted; unquestionably true  
**ineffable** (in-ēf'ā-b'l). Unutterable; beyond one's power to express  
**inequity** (in-ēk'wī-tī). Injustice  
**inert** (in-ūr't). Lacking the power to move; sluggish  
**inertia** (in-ūr'shā). P. 363  
**inestimable** (in-ēs'tī-mā-b'l). Too valuable to be measured; priceless  
**inextricably** (in-ēks'tri-kā-blī). In such a manner that untangling or separation is impossible  
**infallible** (in-fāl'ī-b'l). P. 913  
**infamy** (in'fā-mī). P. 609  
**infinitesimal** (in-fīn'ī-tēs'ī-māl). Immeasurably small  
**ingenuity** (in-jē-nū'ī-tī). P. 437  
**ingenuous** (in-jēn'ū-ūs). Artlessly frank  
**ingratiate** (in-grā'shī-āt). To win one's way into favor  
**insatiable** (in-sā'shī-ā-b'l). Incapable of being satisfied  
**inscrutable** (in-skrōō'tā-b'l). Incapable of being searched into and understood  
**insidious** (in-sīd'ī-ūs). Sly; treacherous; operating inconspicuously but with serious effects  
**instigate** (in'stī-gāt). To urge, especially to evil  
**institutionalize** (in'stī-tū'shūn-āl-īz). To make into a functioning insti-

tution; to establish on a working basis  
**insurgent** (in-sūr'jēnt). Rising in opposition to authority; rebellious  
**intangible** (in-tān'jī-b'l). P. 45  
**integrity** (in-tēg'rī-tī). Honesty; state of being sound, undivided, in complete harmony with oneself  
**intelligentsia** (in-tēl'ī-jēnt'sī-ā). Intellectuals collectively; the educated class  
**interlocutor** (in'tēr-lōk'ū-tēr). P. 103  
**interlude** (in'tēr-lūd). A space of time between events  
**interminable** (in-tūr'mī-nā-b'l). P. 71  
**internecine** (in'tēr-nēs'sin). Involving mutual slaughter; deadly  
**intrepid** (in-trēp'īd). P. 418  
**intuitive** (in-tū'ī-tīv). Possessing insight; understanding without need to consider all the facts  
**inundation** (in'ūn-dā'shūn). A flood  
**invective** (in-vēk'tīv). Abusive utterance  
**inviolable** (in-vī'ō-lā-b'l). Not to be harmed or broken  
**iota** (ī-ō'tā). The smallest letter of the Greek alphabet; hence, a very small quantity  
**iridescent** (ī-rī-dēs'ēnt). Having a rainbowlike play of colors  
**irised** (ī-rīst). Colored like the rainbow  
**irrelevant** (ī-rēl'ē-vānt). Unrelated; unessential  
**ivory tower** (ī'vō-rī tou'ēr). A quiet retreat; symbol for aloofness from real life

## J

**Jack** (jāk). A nickname for a sailor  
**jackanapes** (jāk'ā-nāps). An impertinent fellow  
**jeopardy** (jēp'ēr-dī). Exposure to death, loss, or injury  
**gerbilla** (jūr-bīl'lā); commonly spelled gerbil, gerbille (jūr'bil). Belonging to the mouse family  
**jerky** (jūr'kī). Strips of dried, smoked meat

jocose (jō kōs') Given to jokes and jesting, sportively humorous  
 jocular (jōk'ū ler) Sportive, merry  
 jodhpurs (jod'pōōrz) Riding breeches that fit closely from the knee to just above the ankle  
 johnny (jōn'ī) English slang for "fellow"  
 journalizing (jūr'nāl iz'ing) Entering in a book of records  
 jubilant (ju'bī lānt) Shouting with joy, exulting  
 juggernaut (jug'ēr-nōt) An object or belief calling for blind devotion or ruthless sacrifice  
 jurisdiction (jōōr'is-dīk'shūn) Lawful power or right to exercise authority

## K

keelboat (kēl'bōt) A flat bottomed ship  
 kine (kīn) Cattle

## L

languid (lāng'gwīd) Drooping, sluggish, listless  
 lave (lāv) To wash, bathe  
 laxity (lāk'sī-tī) Lack of tensility, strictness, or precision  
 lay (la) A song, a melody  
 leeward (lē'werd) On or toward the side away from the wind  
 legatee (lēg'a-tē') One to whom a legacy is bequeathed  
 lethargic (lē-thar'jīk) Morbidly drowsy, dull, heavy  
 levity (lēv'ī tī) Lightness, lack of gravity and earnestness  
 libation (li-bā'shūn) A pouring of liquid, as wine, either on the ground or on a victim in sacrifice, as a form of worship, humorously, the drinking of alcoholic liquors  
 libelous (lī'bēl ūs) Slandorous, destructive of another's good name  
 linsey woolsey (līn'zī wōōl'zī) Coarse cloth made of linen and wool, or cotton and wool, associated with early pioneer times, when it was much worn

loquacious (lō kwā'shēnt) Becoming a liquid, melting  
 locoed (lō'kod) Affected with loco disease, caused by cattle eating loco weed They become mad and delirious  
 lodestar (lōd'star) A star that leads and guides, especially the polestar, hence a guiding ideal or principle  
 longitudinality (lōn jī tu'dī nāl'ī-tī) Length, humorously used of a person  
 loquacious (lō kwā'shūš) P 103  
 ludicrous (lū'dī krūs) Comic, provoking laughter  
 luminous (lū'mī nūs) Shining, brilliant bright  
 lurid (lu'rid) Ghastly pale, appearing like glowing fire seen through smoke, harshly vivid or terrible  
 lustrous (lūs'trūs) Having luster, sheen, or brilliance  
 lyre (līr) A small stringed instrument like a harp, symbol of poetic song

## M

machination (māk'ī-nā'shūn) An artful scheme or plot  
 magnanimity (māg'na nīm'ī tī) Generous and courageous spirit  
*Adj*, magnanimous (māg nān'ī-mūs)  
 mail (māl) A flexible fabric of interlinked metal rings used as defensive armor  
 mainmasthead (man'mast hēd') The top of the tallest mast on a ship  
 maisonette (mā zōn ēt') A little house (French)  
 malediction (mal'ē dīk'shūn) Slander, denunciation, a curse  
 malevolence (ma lēv'ō lēns) Strong ill will  
 mall (mōl) Public walk, shaded walk The original was The Mall, St James's Park, London, a fashionable promenade

maneuver (mā-nōō'vēr). Management with artful design  
 mangrove (mǎng'grōv). A tropical tree or shrub  
 manifold (mǎn'fī-fōld). Numerous; many  
 manipulator (mā-nīp'ū-lā'tēr). One who manages skillfully, often for purposes of fraud  
 manzanita (mǎn'zā-nē'tā). Any of various California shrubs belonging to the same family as the rhododendron and the azalea  
 marge (mārj). A margin, as of a stream or a book page  
 marquee (mār-kē'). A large field tent  
 material (mā-tēr'fī-āl). Physical, in contrast to spiritual  
 maudlin (mōd'lin). P. 113  
 maverick (māv'ēr-ik). An unbranded animal, usually a motherless calf, which by custom belongs to the first one to brand it  
 maw (mō). The throat or jaws  
 meager (mē'gēr). Thin; barren; scanty  
 mediator (mē'dī-ā'tēr). One who acts as a go-between, especially to effect a reconciliation  
 mediocrity (mē'dī-ōk'rī-tī). State of being average, undistinguished, neither very good nor very bad  
 melee (mā-lā'). A confused combat  
 mercenary (mūr'sē-nēr'fī). Serving only for pay or gain  
 mere (mēr). A sheet of standing water  
 meridian (mē-rīd'fī-ān). The highest point reached by the sun or other heavenly bodies  
 Mesozoic shale (mēs'ō-zō'ik shāl). Rock formed in an early division of geological history  
 metamorphosis (mēt'ā-mōr'fō-sīs). A striking change in appearance, character, or circumstances  
 metaphor (mēt'ā-fēr). A figure of speech presenting an implied comparison

metate (mā-tā'tā). A hollowed-out stone used by Mexicans for grinding corn by hand  
 meteor (mē'tē-ēr). A heavenly body in rapid motion  
 meteorological (mē'tē-ōr-ō-lōj'fī-kāl). Pertaining to the atmosphere and weather  
 mien (mēn). Manner; demeanor; bearing  
 millennium (mī-lēn'fī-ūm). P. 1169  
 mirage (mī-rāzh'). P. 45  
 mitigate (mīt'fī-gāt). P. 859  
 mizzen (mīz'n). A designated mast on a sailing vessel, the one farthest back on a three-masted schooner, the third from the front when the vessel has more than three masts  
 mogul (mō-gūl'). A great personage; an autocrat  
 Mojave (mō-hā'vā). A desert in southern California  
 mollify (mōl'fī-fī). To soften; appease; pacify; calm  
 monody (mōn'ō-dī). A mournful song; a funeral song  
 monosyllable (mōn'ō-sīl'ā-b'l). A word of one syllable  
 morass (mō-rās'). A tract of soft, wet ground; a marsh; swamp  
 moribund (mōr'fī-būnd). In a dying state; near death  
 morose (mō-rōs'). Gloomy; sullen  
 motley (mōt'li). The characteristic dress of the professional fool; hence, consisting of many colors  
 myriad (mīr'fī-ād). A great but indefinite number

# N

nabob (nā'bōb). An East Indian official given to luxurious dress; hence, anyone who wears a gorgeous uniform or is very rich  
 naïve (nā-ēv'). P. 206  
 nebulous (nēb'ū-lūs). Cloudy; hazy; misty  
 Neptune (nēp'tūn). The Roman god of the sea  
 niche (nīch). A recess in a wall

niter (nī'tēr). A white salt used in making gunpowder; saltpeter  
 nocturne (nōk'tūrn). A musical composition dealing with night  
 noisome (noi'sūm). Harmful; destructive; offensive to the senses  
 nomenclature (nō'mēn-klā'tūr). P.

322

nonchalance (nōn'shā-lāns). P. 506  
 nonconformist (nōn'kōn-fōrm'ist).  
 One who does not abide by some established custom or doctrine  
 nostalgia (nōs-tāl'jī-ā). Homesickness  
 nullify (nūl'ī-fi). To make ineffective; to render of no value

## O

obdurate (ōb'dū-rāt). Hardened in feelings; unyielding  
 obeisance (ō-bā'sāns). A gesture, usually a low bow, in token of respect or homage  
 oblique (ōb-lēk'). Slanting; indirect; not straightforward  
 obliterate (ōb-lit'er-āt). To erase or blot out; to destroy  
 oblivion (ōb-liv'ī-ūn). Forgetfulness; state or fact of being forgotten  
 obscene (ōb-sēn'). Foul; disgusting; offensive to modesty  
 obsequious (ōb-sē'kwī-ūs). Compliant to excess; fawning  
 obsolete (ōb'sō-lēt). P. 382  
 obtrude (ōb-trōd'). To thrust forward without request; to thrust oneself upon attention  
 obviate (ōb'vī-āt). To make unnecessary  
 occult (ō-kūlt'). Secret; concealed  
 odium (ō'dī-ūm). Disgrace; the reproach and discredit attached to something hated  
 oligarchy (ōl'ī-gār'kī). P. 1038  
 ominous (ōm'fī-nūs). Foreshadowing evil  
 omnipotence (ōm-nīp'ō-tēns). P. 178  
 omniscient (ōm-nīsh'ēnt). P. 401

omnivorous (ōm-nīv'ō-rūs). Eating both animal and vegetable food; greedy  
 onerous (ōn'ēr-ūs). Burdensome; oppressive  
 opalescent (ō'pāl-ēs'ēnt). Reflecting a rainbowlike play of color with a milky overtone  
 opaque (ō-pāk'). P. 45  
 oracular (ō-rāk'ū-lēr). Forecasting the future, with solemnity and dignity  
 orb'd (ōrb'd). Round in shape  
 orient (ō'rī-ēnt). To acquaint oneself with and adjust oneself to the existing situation  
 ornate (ōr-nāt'). Elaborately or excessively adorned; over-decorated  
 ostensible (ōs-tēn'sī-b'l). P. 25  
 ostentatious (ōs'tēn-tā'shūs). P. 25

## P

pacific (pā-sīf'ik). Calm; peaceful; peace-loving  
 pacify (pās'ī-fi). To appease; calm; quiet  
 paean (pē'ān). A song of joy, praise, triumph, or thanksgiving  
 pagan (pā'gān). P. 098  
 palatable (pāl'it-ā-b'l). Agreeable to the taste; hence, acceptable, pleasing  
 palatial (pā-lā'shāl). Befitting a palace; magnificent  
 palaver (pā-lāv'ēr). Profuse or idle talk  
 pall (pōl). A covering for a coffin  
 pallid (pāl'id). Pale, especially unnaturally so  
 pallor (pāl'ēr). A pale or wan appearance  
 palpable (pāl'pā-b'l). P. 45  
 palpitate (pāl'pī-tāt). To beat rapidly and strongly; to throb  
 panegyryze (pān'ē-jī-rīz). To speak or write in high praise  
 panorama (pān'ō-rā'mā). An unobstructed view of a region in every direction

pantheon (pǎn-thě'ōn). The gods of a people collectively  
 paradox (pār'ā-dōks). P. 1173  
 parapet (pār'ā-pēt). A low wall at the edge of a bridge, platform, etc.  
 paraphrase (pār'ā-frāz). A free translation, or restatement in another manner  
 pariah (pā-rī'ā). An outcast; one despised by society  
 parochialism (pā-rō'kī-āl-iz'm). The state of being limited in range or scope, as to one's own parish; hence, narrow interests or opinions  
 parsimony (pār'sī mō'nī). Stinginess; refusal to spend even though possessed of plenty of money  
 partisan (pār'tī-zān). A strongly devoted follower  
 pathological (pāth'ō-lōj'ī-kāl). Unhealthy; due to disease  
 pathos (pā'thōs). P. 85  
 patriarch (pā'trī-ārk). Ruler of a family or tribe  
 patrician (pā-trīsh'ān). A person of high birth or breeding  
 patronage (pā'trūn-ij). The financial support afforded by patrons or customers  
 pedantic (pē-dān'tik). Making a needless display of learning  
 pedigree (pēd'ī-grē). A table representing a line of ancestors  
 peltry (pēl'trī). Pelts or furs, collectively  
 penury (pēn'ū-rī). Extreme poverty  
 perambulation (pēr-ām'bū-lā'shūn). Walking around or over  
 perdition (pēr-dīsh'un). Ruin; eternal death; hell  
 peremptory (pēr-ēmp'tō-rī). Leaving no chance for denial or refusal; decisive  
 perfidious (pēr-fīd'ī-ūs). P. 609  
 perfunctory (pēr-fūngk'tō-rī). Done mechanically by way of routine; careless; indifferent  
 permeate (pūr'mē-āt). To spread through

peroration (pēr'ō-rā'shūn). The concluding part of an oration  
 persiflage (pūr'sī-flāzh). Frivolous or bantering talk  
 pertinacity (pūr'tī-nās'ī-tī). Unyielding perseverance  
 pertinence (pūr'tī-nēns). A fact related to the matter in hand  
 perturbation (pūr'tēr-bā'shūn). A state of great alarm or agitation  
 petrol (pēt'rōl). In England, gasoline  
 phantasm (fǎn'tāz'm). A creation of the imagination, fancy, or disordered mind; a ghost  
 phantom (fǎn'tūm). A delusion; a specter  
 phenomenon (īē-nōm'ē-nōn). An exceptional, unusual, or abnormal thing or occurrence  
 philanthropist (fī-lān'thrō-pīst). P. 1188  
 philosophic (fīl'ō-sōf'ik). Rational; wise; temperate; unruffled  
 phosphorescent (fōs'tō-rēs'ēnt). Gleaming, especially in the dark  
 phthisic (tīz'ik). A wasting disease, usually tuberculosis  
 pigment (pīg'mēnt). A coloring matter  
 pillage (pīl'ij). Act of plundering or looting  
 piquant (pē'kānt). Pleasantly sharp; having a lively charm  
 placidity (plā-sīd'ī-tī). Calmness; serenity  
 plague (plāg). To vex or torment  
 plashy (plāsh'ī). Abounding in puddles; splashy  
 platitude (plāt'ī-tūd). A thought or remark which is flat, dull, or commonplace  
 plausible (plō'zī-b'l). Apparently reasonable or fair; capable of belief  
 plutocrat (plōō'tō-krāt). One who has power or influence due to his wealth  
 poignant (poin'yānt). P. 138  
 point (point). A mere dot; a brief moment in contrast with eternity



- polyphonic (pŏl'ī-fŏn'īk). Consisting of many sounds
- pommel (pŭm'əl). The rounded knob at the front and top of a saddle
- pontifical (pŏn-tīf'ī-kāl). Having the dignity of a high church official
- pontificate (pŏn-tīf'ī-kât). The term of office of a Pope
- portend (pŏr-tēnd'). To give a warning; foreshadow
- portentous (pŏr-tēn'tūs). P. 401
- posterity (pŏs-tēr'-ī-tī). Offspring or descendants
- potential (pŏ-tēn'shāl). P. 178
- potpourri (pŏ'pŏŏ-rē'). A mixture; a medley
- precarious (prē-kā'ri-ūs). Uncertain, insecure
- precept (prē'sēpt). A rule of action or conduct
- precipitate (prē-sīp'ī-tāt). To cause to happen suddenly
- preclude (prē-klŏd'). To put a barrier before; to shut out
- predicament (prē-dīk'ā-mēnt). An unpleasant or trying situation
- prehensile (prē-hēn'sīl). P. 1129
- premise (prēm'is). P. 1173
- premonition (prē'mō-nish'ūn). Previous warning, notice, or information; forewarning
- preoccupation (prē-ŏk'ū-pā'shŭn). State of being lost in thought about matters other than those immediately before one
- preponderating (prē-pŏn'dēr-āt'ing). P. 1164
- prepossession (prē'pŏ-zēsh'ūn). A feeling or opinion formed in advance
- prerogative (prē-rŏg'ā-tīv). Of first rank or importance
- prescient (prē'shī-ēnt). P. 401
- presumptive (prē-zŭmp'tīv). Believed on evidence which is probable but not conclusive
- preternatural (prē'tēr-nāt'ū-rāl). Different from what is natural; abnormal
- primeval (prī-mē'vāl). Belonging to the first ages
- privation (prī-vā'shŭn). State of being in want of necessities
- probity (prŏ'bī-tī). Tried virtue; honesty; moral excellence
- proclivity (prŏ-klīv'ī-tī). Inclination or tendency
- procrastinate (prŏ-krās'tī-nāt). P. 410
- prodigal (prŏd'ī-gāl). Recklessly extravagant
- prodigious (prŏ-dīj'ūs). Extraordinary; marvelous; astonishing
- prodigy (prŏd'ī-jī). Someone or something out of the ordinary; a marvel
- profane (prŏ-fān'). P. 609
- progeny (prŏj'ē-nī). Offspring
- proletarian (prŏ'lē-tār'ī-ān). A laborer for day wages, not possessed of capital
- prolific (prŏ-līf'īk). Fruitful or productive
- promiscuous (prŏ-mīs'kū-ūs). Undiscriminating; irregular; casual
- propensity (prŏ-pēn'sī-tī). Natural inclination; disposition
- propitiate (prŏ-pīsh'ī-āt). To make favorable
- proscenium (prŏ-sē'nī-ŭm). The curtain and its framework in a theater
- protozoa (prŏ-tŏ-zŏ'ā). Tiny animals, mostly too small to be seen with the naked eye
- protracted (prŏ-trāk'tēd). Long drawn out
- provincial (prŏ-vīn'shāl). Countrified; not polished, narrow
- prowess (prŏw'ēs). Distinguished bravery; valor
- pseudonym (sŭ'dŏ-nīm). A fictitious name; pen name
- psychic (sī'kīk). Sensitive to non-physical forces
- Puck (pŭk). The fairy in *Midsummer Night's Dream* who moved about so quickly from group to group
- punctilious (pŭngk-tīl'ī-ūs). Scru-

pulously exact in detail, or careful to mind codes in conduct  
 pungence (pŭn'jěns). A penetrating odor  
 purgatory (pŭr'gá-tō'rĭ). A place or state of temporary punishment; torment by uncertainty as to the future  
 purloin (pŭr-loin'). To steal

Q

quagmire (kwág'mĭr'). Soft, wet, miry land, which shakes or yields under the foot  
 quench (kwěnch). To extinguish; subdue; suppress  
 querulous (kwě'r'ŭ-lŭs). P. 113  
 quizzically (kwiz'ĭ-kāl-ĭ). In a bantering, teasing manner

R

ramification (rám'ĭ-fĭ-kā'shŭn). A branch, or subdivision  
 rampart (rám'párt). A broad embankment around a fortification  
 rapier (rā'pĭ-ēr). A straight two-edged sword, having a narrow pointed blade  
 rational (rāsh'ŭn-āl). Having the power of reasoning or understanding; acceptable to such power  
 rationalization (rāsh'ŭn-āl-ĭ-zā'shŭn). A mental process of assigning reasons for action or attitudes which are more pleasing to the ego than the real reasons involved  
 raucous (rō'kŭs). P. 662  
 recalcitrance (rē-kāl'si-trāns). Stubborn rebelliousness; resistance to authority  
 reciprocal (rē-sĭp'rō-kāl). Shared, felt, or shown by both sides  
 reconnoiter (rēk'ō-noi'tēr). P. 92  
 rectitude (rēk'tĭ-tūd). Rightness or correctness of judgment or principle  
 recumbent (rē-kŭm'běnt). Lying down; resting; inactive

redoubtable (rē-dout'á-b'l). Formidable; worthy of respect  
 redress (rē-drěs'). To set right or make amends for, as a fault or injury  
 reef (rēf). To reduce a sail by rolling or folding up a part of it  
 refectory (rē-fěk'tō-rĭ). A dining hall, especially in a monastery or convent  
 rehabilitate (rē'hà-bĭl'ĭ-tāt). To restore to efficiency  
 reimburse (rē'im-bŭrs'). To pay back  
 reiterate (rē-ĭt'ēr-āt). To repeat over and over again  
 relegate (rēl'ē-gāt). To banish; to dismiss by putting out of mind  
 relevancy (rēl'ē-vān-sĭ). Proper application to the matter at hand  
 reminiscent (rēm'ĭ-nĭs'ěnt). Recalling past experiences  
 remuda (rā-mōō'dá). The drove of saddle horses used by one working "outfit" of cowboys  
 Renaissance (rě'n'ě-sāns'). A rebirth; especially the revival of learning and culture in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries  
 rendezvous (rān'dě-vōō). An appointed meeting place, or an appointment to meet  
 repellent (rē-pěl'ěnt). Driving away; causing aversion or disgust  
 repercussion (rē'pēr-kŭsh'ŭn). The act of rebounding, being driven back  
 replenish (rē-plěn'ĭsh). To fill again; to restock  
 replica (rēp'li-kà). A very close copy  
 reprimand (rēp'rĭ-mānd). To chide; to reprove severely  
 reprobate (rēp'rō-bāt). To condemn or reject  
 repudiate (rē-pŭ'dĭ-āt). To cast off; disown; refuse to acknowledge  
 requisite (rēk'wĭ-zĭt). Required by circumstances or nature  
 retribution (rēt'rĭ-bŭ'shŭn). Punishment or reward according to the desert of the individual

reverberation (rē-vûr'bēr-ā'shūn).

Re-echo

rife (rif). Abounding; plentiful

rigging (rig'ing). The ropes, chains, etc., that serve to lower and raise the spars and masts of a vessel, or to set and trim the sails

roquelaure (rōk'ēl-ōr). A knee-length coat buttoned in front, worn after 1700

roundup (round'up'). Act of gathering together cattle on the range by riding around them and driving them in

rouse (rouz). A toast

rudimentary (rōō'dī-mēn'tā-rī). Elementary; immature; unfinished

rue (rōō). Sorrow; regret; compassion

rune (rōōn). Any of the old Germanic symbols employed in magic and in secret writing

rusty (rūs'tī). Defective cattle cut out of the roundup

ruthless (rōōth'lēs). Without pity or mercy

## S

sacrament (sāk'rā-mēnt). A religious ceremony; a spiritual covenant

sacrilege (sāk'rī-lēj). The crime of stealing, mis-using, or violating that which is sacred

sadistic (sā-dis'tik). Finding pleasure in cruelty or another's suffering

saga (sā'gā). An ancient legend, tale, or history, especially of the Norse races

sagacious (sā-gā'shūs). Of keen penetration and judgment; shrewd

sage (sāj). One distinguished for wisdom

sanction (sāngk'shūn). To confirm or approve

sand boil (sānd boil). A springlike seepage of flood water coming up from underground behind the protection of a dam or levee

sanguine (sāng'gwin). P. 916

sapling (sāp'ling). A young tree

Saracen (sār'ā-sēn). A wanderer of the desert between Syria and Arabia; an Arab

sarcophagus (sār-kōf'ā-gūs). A large coffin exposed to view in the open air or in a tomb

sardonic (sār-dōn'ik). Scornful; mocking

satellite (sāt'ē-līt). A heavenly body revolving around a larger one

satire (sāt'ir). A literary composition holding up errors or abuses or folly to ridicule

savannah (sā-vān'ā). A grassy plain with few trees

scar (skār). An isolated or protruding rock

scathe (skāth). To injure by fire or withering words

schism (sīz'm). A division or separation

scoriac (skō'rī-āk). Full of rock refuse

scourge (skūrj). To whip or flog

sea mell (sē mēl). A mixture or mingling of creatures of the sea

seance (sā'ans'). A meeting of spiritualists to receive spirit communications

secular (sēk'ū-lēr). Pertaining to worldly rather than spiritual matters; not under church control

seer (sēr). A prophet; wise man

semblance (sēm'blāns). Outward appearance; resemblance

senescent (sē-nēs'ēnt). Growing old

sensuous (sēn'shōō-ūs). Pertaining to or appealing to the senses

sententious (sēn-tēn'shūs). Full of meaning, or energetic in expression; sometimes excessively or too deliberately so

sepulcher (sēp'ul-kēr). A tomb; a burial vault

seraph (sēr'āf). A type of angel; pl., seraphim (sēr'ā-fīm)

sere (sēr). Dry; withered

serried (sēr'id). Crowded; pressed together; dense

servile (sūr'vil). Behaving like a slave; abject; fawning

shanghai (shǎng-hí'). To drug, intoxicate, or render unconscious and ship as a sailor  
 sheeted home (shēt'éd hōm). Spread a sail as wide and flat as possible  
 shoal (shōl). Shallow  
 shrive (shrív). To pardon the sins of one confessing them  
 shroud (shroud). One of the ropes leading from a vessel's mastheads to give lateral support to the masts  
 siesta (sǐ-ēs'tà). A short rest or nap after the midday meal  
 silicate (síl'í-kât). A compound containing silica, sometimes showing the properties of glass  
 simile (sím'í-lē). A figure of speech specifically comparing one thing with another  
 singlet (sǐng'glēt). An undershirt or jersey  
 sinister (sín'is-tēr). Boding evil  
 sinuous (sín'û-üs). Winding; intricate; of a wavy form  
 skeptical (skēp'û-kāl). Having a critical or doubting attitude  
 slough (slūf). To cast off as a snake does its skin  
 sluice (slōos). An artificial passage for water, used by miners for washing out gold from sand  
 solicitor general (sô-lis'í-tēr jèn'-ēr-äl). A high law officer in the government of Great Britain, in charge of prosecution of criminals  
 soliloquy (sô-lil'ô-kwǐ). P. 103  
 solstitial (sôl'stīs). The day on which the sun is farthest from the equator, north or south  
 sombrero (sôm-brā'rō). A broad-brimmed felt hat worn in Spanish America and the Southwest  
 sonorous (sô-nō'rūs). Loud or full in sound; resounding  
 sophisticated (sô-fis'tí-kât'éd). P. 206  
 sordid (sôr'díd). Vile; base  
 span (spān). The distance from the tip of the thumb to the tip of the little finger when the hand is ex-

tended; also, a limited space of time  
 spar (spär). A mast or yard on a sailing vessel  
 sparse (spärs). Thinly scattered  
 specious (spē'shūs). Deceptively appearing to be fair, just, or correct  
 spindle (spĭn'd'l). In spinning, a tapered stick with a notch at one end to catch the yarn  
 spontaneous (spôn-tā'nē-üs). Self-acting; voluntary  
 spurious (spū'ri-üs). Counterfeit; false  
 squalid (skwöl'id). Dirty through neglect; filthy  
 squalor (skwöl'ēr). Miserable and unkempt condition; filth  
 stamina (stām'í-nä). Vigor; endurance  
 steerage (stēr'j). The poorest and cheapest accommodations on a passenger vessel  
 stentorian (stĕn-tō'rĭ-än). Extremely loud (from Stentor, a loud-voiced herald in the *Iliad*)  
 stipulate (stĭp'û-lāt). To arrange definitely; to agree upon or specify  
 strategist (strät'ĕ-jĭst). One skilled in the science of directing military movements  
 stratification (strät'í-fĭ-kā'shŭn). Arranged in layers  
 suave (swäv). Smoothly polite; polished  
 subsequent (süb'sē-kwĕnt). Following in time; later  
 subtle (süt'l). Cunningly made or contrived; artful; delicate  
 subversion (süb-vür'shŭn). P. 923  
 succinct (sük-sĭngkt'). Concise; brief; to the point  
 succor (sük'ēr). To aid or help; relieve  
 suffuse (sŭ-füz'). To overspread; diffuse  
 supersede (sŭ'pēr-sĕd'). To take the place of; to cause to be set aside  
 supine (sŭ-pĭn'). P. 909

**supplicate** (sŭp'li-kāt). P. 909  
**surcease** (sŭr-sēs'). Cessation; end  
**surlly** (sŭr'li). Ill-natured; rude;  
 sullen  
**surmise** (sŭr-mīz'). To imagine on  
 slight grounds; to guess  
**surplice** (sŭr'plis). Outer vestment  
 worn by Roman Catholic and  
 Anglican clergy  
**surtout** (sŭr-tōōt'). An overcoat  
**surveillance** (sŭr-vāl'āns). Close su-  
 pervision; constant guard  
**sustenance** (sŭs'tē-nāns). Means of  
 support; often food or nourish-  
 ment  
**swain** (swān). A young peasant;  
 a rustic fellow  
**sylvan** (sil'vān). Pertaining to the  
 woods  
**symphony** (sīm'fō-nī). A harmony  
 of sounds  
**synagogue** (sīn'ā-gōg). A Jewish  
 place of worship, or temple  
**synchronize** (sing'krō-nīz). P. 312  
**synod** (sīn'ūd). A formal meeting  
 to discuss and decide on church  
 matters  
**synonymous** (sī-nōn'ī-mŭs). Alike  
 or nearly alike in meaning  
**synthetic** (sīn-thēt'ik). Combining  
 elements to form a whole; made  
 by artificial rather than natural  
 processes

## T

**tabbied silk** (tāb'īd silk). Watered,  
 waved, or striped taffeta  
**tacit** (tās'it). Unspoken; silent;  
 implied though not expressed  
**Tally Book** (tāl'ī bōōk). Book for  
 keeping a record of the cattle on  
 a ranch  
**tamarack** (tām'ā-rāk). A tree, any  
 of several North American larches  
**tangible** (tān'jī-b'l). P. 45  
**tantalyze** (tān'tā-līz). To tease by  
 keeping something desirable in  
 sight but out of reach  
**tarn** (tār'n). A small mountain lake  
 or pool  
**tartar** (tār'tēr). A person who

proves too strong for one who  
 attacks him  
**taut** (tōt). Tightly drawn  
**tawdry** (tō'dri). Cheap and gaudy  
**tenet** (tēn'ēt). An opinion, prin-  
 ciple, or dogma  
**tenoned** and **mortised** (tēn'und,  
 mōr'tist). Joined firmly, with  
 projections of one part fitted into  
 shaped cavities in the other part  
**tensile** (tēn'sil). Pertaining to  
 stretching or straining  
**tentacle** (tēn'tā-k'l). P. 1129  
**termagant** (tŭr'mā-gānt). A quar-  
 relsome, scolding woman  
**terminate** (tŭr'mī-nāt). P. 71  
**terrain** (tē-rān'). A tract of ground  
 immediately under observation  
**terrestrial** (tē-rēs'trī-āl). Earthly;  
 worldly  
**tintinnabulation** (tīn'tī-nāb'ū-lā-  
 shŭn). The ringing of bells; a  
 tinkling or jingling sound, as of a  
 bell  
**torpor** (tōr'pēr). Sluggishness  
**torso** (tōr'sō). The trunk of the  
 human body  
**tortilla** (tōr-tē'yā). A thin, un-  
 leavened cake of cornmeal baked  
 on a heated iron or stone (Mex-  
 ican)  
**towhead** (tō'hēd). One having soft  
 whitish hair  
**transient** (trān'shēnt). Of short or  
 uncertain duration  
**transitory** (trān'sī-tō'rī). Tempo-  
 rary; not enduring  
**transmute** (trāns-mŭt'). To change  
 from one nature, form, or sub-  
 stance to another  
**travail** (trāv'āl). Toil, especially  
 painful effort or exertion  
**treatise** (trē'tīs). A book or article  
 which treats a subject in a sys-  
 tematic manner, for purposes of  
 explanation or argument  
**trek** (trēk). A trip or journey, es-  
 pecially an arduous one  
**troll** (trōl). A dwarf or elf  
**truism** (trōō'īz'm). An undoubted  
 or self-evident truth

tympanum (tĩm'pá-nũm). The ear-drum, or middle ear

usurpation (ũ'zũr-pá'shũn). Unauthorized exercise of powers belonging to another

U

ubiquitous (ũ-bĩk'wĩ-tũs). Being everywhere at the same time

ultimate (ũ'tĩ-măt). Arrived at as a final result; last; farthest

uncanny (ũn-kăn'ĩ). Ghostly; weird; unnaturally strange

unconscionable (ũn-kõn'shũn-à-b'l). Not guided or controlled by conscience; unscrupulous

uncouth (ũn-kõoth'). Rude; unrefined; boorish

unction (ũngk'shũn). Affected fervor or earnestness in discourse

undeviating (ũn-dẽ'vĩ-ăt'ĩng). Holding firmly to a course; not straying

undulate (ũn'dũ-lăt). P. 473

unguent (ũng'gwẽnt). A salve or ointment

unique (ũ-nẽk'). Being without a like or equal; being the only one of the kind or quality

unison (ũ'nĩ-sũn). Harmony; agreement

unmitigated (ũn-mĩt'ĩ-găt'ẽd). P. 859

unorthodox (ũn-õr'thõ-dõks). At variance with the accepted creed, belief, or method of procedure

unredressed (ũn'rẽ-drẽst'). Not set right; calling for amends that have not been made

unremitting (ũn'rẽ-mĩt'ĩng). Incessant; without stopping or pausing

unrequited (ũn'rẽ-kwĩt'ẽd). Not returned; not repaid

unscathed (ũn-skăthd'). Unharmed

untoward (ũn-tõ'ẽrd). Inconvenient; vexatious

untrammelled (ũn-trămm'ẽld). Not bound; free; unlimited

unwarrantable (ũn-wõr'ăn-tă-b'l). Indefensible; not justifiable

urbanity (ũr-băn'ĩ-tĩ). P. 357

usurer (ũ'zhũ-rẽr). One who lends money at an extremely high rate

V

vacillation (văs'ĩ-lă'shũn). Wavering in purpose or conduct

vagary (vâ-gă'rĩ). P. 259

vandal (văn'dăl). P. 998

veer (vẽr). To change direction

vellum (vẽl'ũm). Fine-grained skin prepared for writing upon; parchment

venerable (vẽn'ẽr-à-b'l). Worthy of honor and respect

verdure (vũr'dũr). Greenness; vegetation

veritable (vẽr'ĩ-tă-b'l). Real; true; actual

vermillion (vẽr-mĩl'yũn). A brilliant red, the color or the pigment

verminous (vũr'mĩ-nũs). Literally, infested with vermin; figuratively, infested or cluttered with undesirable matter

vernacular (vẽr-năk'ũ-lẽr). The common mode of expression in a particular locality

vesper (vẽs'pẽr). Evening

vestige (vẽs'tĩj). P. 382

vestryman (vẽs'trĩ-măn). A member of the church board

vicarious (vĩ-kăr'ĩ-ũs). Taking the place of another person or thing

vicissitude (vĩ-sĩs'ĩ-tũd). A complete change of fortune or circumstances

vigilance (vĩj'ĩ-lăns). Watchfulness; caution

vindicate (vĩn'dĩ-kăt). To defend or secure against attack; to justify against denial

vindictive (vĩn-dĩk'tĩv). Inclined to hold a grudge; disposed to revenge

vintage (vĩn'tĩj). The wine of a certain year; hence, the particular time a person or thing belongs to

virginal (vũr'jĩ-năl). Pure; undefiled

virtuoso (vûr'tû-ō'sō). One devoted to or skilled in one of the fine arts

virulent (vîr'û-lënt). P. 343

virus (vî'rûs). P. 343

vitreous (vî'rê-üs). Like glass, as in color, glass green

vituperative (vi-tû'pêr-â'tiv). Scolding; abusive

vixen (vîk's'n). An ill-tempered, scolding woman

vocational (vô-kâ'shün-äl). Having to do with employment or profession

vociferate (vô-sîf'êr-ât). To cry out loudly

volcanic (völ-kän'ík). Explosive

voluble (völ'û-b'l). Fluent in speech; talkative

voluminous (vô-lû'mî-nûs). Of great volume or bulk

voluptuous (vô-lûp'tû-üs). Luxurious; highly pleasing to the senses

votive (vô'tiv). Given or done as an act of devotion; consecrated

vouchsafe (vouch-sâf'). To condescend to grant or bestow

## W

wain (wân). A wagon or cart

wanton (wôn'tün). Undisciplined or unrestrained, sometimes in the sense of carefree, sometimes in the sense of immoral

weal (wêl). Prosperity; happiness

weir (wêr). A fence of stakes, brushwood, or the like, set in a stream, tideway, or inlet of the sea, for taking fish

werewolf (wêr'wôölf'). A person transformed into a wolf and having a wolf's appetite, or a person who can assume a wolf's shape at will

winnow (wîn'ô). To sift or scatter  
withband (wîth'bând'). A slender, flexible twig or branch used as a rope or band

wold (wöld). An open lowland

wraith (râth). An apparition of a living person; a specter

writhe (rîth). P. 473

## Y

yearling (yêr'ling). An animal one year old, or in the second year of its age

yokel (yô'kêl). A plowboy; a country fellow

yucca (yûk'â). A plant often found in arid sections, having a cluster of stiff, sharp-pointed leaves, bearing a cluster of white blossoms on a high stalk

## Z

zealous (zêl'ûs). Ardently interested; enthusiastic

zenith (zê'nîth). The point in the heavens directly overhead

# Index

- Abolition Riots*, William Cullen Bryant, 1036  
*Abraham Davenport*, John Greenleaf Whittier, 486  
*Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight*, Vachel Lindsay, 650  
 Adamic, Louis, 362; review of book by, 362; selection, 1165  
 Adams, Andy, 1072  
 Adams, Franklin P., 705; poem, 705  
 Adams, John, 895  
 Adams, Samuel, 895  
 Advancing Frontier, The, 966  
 Age of Common Sense, The, 876  
 Alcott, Bronson, 946  
 Alcott, Louisa May, 946, 1210  
 Aldrich, Thomas Bailey, 51, 93, 1147; story, 93  
*All the Traffic Will Bear*, Frank Norris, 1120  
 Allen, Hervey, 1209  
 Allen, James Lane, 50  
*Almost Island*, William Beebe, 304  
*Altered Look about the Hills, An*, Emily Dickinson, 570  
 American Fiction, 7; map, end papers  
*American Hercules, An*, James Stevens, 1098  
 American Literary Independence and Romanticism, 930  
 American Revolution, The, causes, 892-93; literature of, 895-97; selections about, 358, 474, 905-19  
 American Tour, The, 1  
 Anderson, Maxwell, 721  
 Anderson, Sherwood, 53, 805, 1207, 1213; radio play, 805  
*Annabel Lee*, Edgar Allan Poe, 547  
*Anne Rutledge*, Edgar Lee Masters, 634  
 Antin, Mary, 1113; selections, 1113  
*Appraisal of Washington, An*, Thomas Jefferson, 927  
*Arsenal at Springfield, The*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 494  
 Artemus Ward. *See* Ward, Artemus.  
 Arthur, T. S., 49  
*Aspects of the Pines*, Paul Hamilton Hayne, 578  
 Audubon, John James, 371  
*Author's Account of Himself, The*, Washington Irving, 267  
*Autocrat of the Breakfast Table, The*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, selection from, 294  
*Autumn Daybreak*, Edna St. Vincent Millay, 675  
*Awful Fate of Mr. Wolf, The*, Joel Chandler Harris, 114  
 Backward Glance, A, 825  
*Ballad of Trees and the Master, A*, Sidney Lanier, 585  
 Barker, James Nelson, 718  
*Barnacles*, Sidney Lanier, 583  
 Barnum, Phineas Taylor, 371; selection about, 372  
*Barnum's American Museum*, M. R. Werner, 372  
 Barry, Philip, 722  
*Barter*, Sara Teasdale, 668  
*Battle of the Kegs, The*, Francis Hopkinson, 917  
*Battlefield, The*, William Cullen Bryant, 471  
*Bay Psalm Book, The*, 851; selection from, 854  
*Beat! Beat! Drums!* Walt Whitman, 561  
 Beebe, William, 304; essay, 304  
 Belasco, David, 719-20  
*Bells, The*, Edgar Allan Poe, 537  
*Bells of San Blas, The*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 503  
 Benchley, Robert C., 254; essay, 255  
 Benét, Stephen Vincent, 462, 680; poems, 680-87  
*Benjamin Franklin*, Carl Van Doren, review of, 360  
*Bewick Finzer*, Edwin Arlington Robinson, 611  
 Bierce, Ambrose, 1148



- Biography: Reading List, 451; Section, 367  
*Birches*, Robert Frost, 622  
*Bird*, Robert Montgomery, 718  
*Birthplace, The*, Robert Frost, 625  
 Boker, George Henry, 718  
 Book Reviews, 358  
 Boone, Daniel, 1  
*Boy Who Was Traded for a Horse, A*, James Saxon Childers, 1189  
 Boyd, James, 1209  
*Boyhood*, Mark Twain, 403  
*Boys, The*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, 511  
 Bradford, William, 847, 851; selection, 847  
 Bradstreet, Anne, 931  
 Brown, Charles Brockden, 46, 934-35  
 Brown, Sterling, 1210  
 Browne, Charles Farrar. *See* Ward, Artemus.  
*Brute Neighbors*, Henry David Thoreau, 286  
 Bryant, William Cullen, 467, 939-40; poems, 467-72; editorial, 1036  
 Buck, Pearl S., 53, 178, 1210; story, 179  
 Bunner, Henry Cuyler, 51, 697, 1146; poem, 697  
*Business Letter, A*, Artemus Ward, 1023  
*Buttons*, Carl Sandburg, 641  
 Byrd, Richard E., 844, 862  
 Byrd, Colonel William, 862, 871; selections, 871  
  
 Cable, George Washington, 50  
 Caldwell, Erskine, 1208  
 Calhoun, John C., 1028  
 Canby, Henry S., 354; essay, 354  
*Candor*, H. C. Bunner, 697  
 Carman, Bliss, 598, 1146; poems, 599-600  
*Carol of Death, The*, Walt Whitman, 562  
 Carver, Dr. G. W., selection about, 1189  
*Cask of Amontillado, The*, Edgar Allan Poe, 86  
 Cather, Willa, 1207, 1208, 1210  
 Cavaliers, *The*, 843  
*Century, The*, Christopher Morley, 323  
*Chambered Nautilus, The*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, 514  
*Charleston*, Henry Timrod, 574  
 Charleston Writers, 961  
*Chicago*, Carl Sandburg, 640  
 Childers, James Saxon, 1189; selection, 1189  
 Churchill, Winston, 1150  
 Civil War, *The*. *See* War between the States  
*Clean Curtains*, Carl Sandburg, 642  
 Clemens, Samuel Langhorne. *See* Twain, Mark  
*Coin, The*, Sara Teasdale, 666  
 Colonial Life and Literature, 842  
 Columbus, Christopher, 1, 844; poem about, 590  
*Columbus*, Joaquin Miller, 590  
*Common Sense*, Thomas Paine, selection from, 909  
*Compensation*, Ralph Waldo Emerson, poem, 473, selection from essay, 282  
*Concord Hymn, The*, Ralph Waldo Emerson, 474  
 Connell, Richard, 26; story, 26  
 Connelly, Marc, 722  
*Conquered Banner, The*, Abram J. Ryan, 1059  
*Constitution of the United States, The*, formation of, 897-99; speech in defense of, 920; preamble, 923  
 Contemporary American Literature, 1204  
 Cooper, James Fenimore, 46, 47, 937-39  
*Country Practice*, Dr. Arthur E. Hertzler, 439  
*Courtin', The*, James Russell Lowell, 517  
 Cowboy Literature, 1072; selection, 1084  
*Cowboy's Dream, The*, 1084  
 Crackerbox Philosophers, 970  
 Crane, Stephen, 1148  
*Creation, The*, James Weldon Johnson, 663  
*Crevasse*, Lyle Saxon, 1173  
 Crèvecoeur, Jean de, 893-94, 900; selection, 900  
 Crockett, Davy, 969  
 Cullen, Countee, 1210  
  
 Daly, Augustin, 719  
 Daly, Maureen, 237; story, 238  
 Daly, Thomas Augustine, 1118; poem, 1118  
 Dana, Richard Henry, Jr., 969, 1017; selection, 1017

- Darest Thou Now O Soul*, Walt Whitman, 568  
 Davis, Richard Harding, 53  
 Dawson, Sarah Morgan, 370  
 Day, Clarence, 260; essay, 261  
*Deal of the Hired Man, The*, Robert Frost, 626  
*Declaration of Independence, The*, Thomas Jefferson, 896, 914  
 De Kruif, Paul, 327; essay, 328  
 Depression, The, 1155; selections about, 1165-72  
 Development of the Essay, 266  
 Development of Fiction in America, 46  
*Devil and Tom Walker, The*, Washington Irving, 60  
 Dickinson, Emily, 455, 569, 959; poems, 569-73  
 Dickinson, John, 895  
*Dirge without Music*, Edna St. Vincent Millay, 674  
*Discoverer of the North Cape, The*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 499  
*Divisions of the Re-echo Club*, Carolyn Wells, 699  
 Dobie, J. Frank, 312, 1208; essay, 313  
*Doorbell Rang: 1932, The*, Louis Adamic, 1165  
 Dos Passos, John, 1207  
 Drama: Reading List, 821; Section, 715  
 Dreiser, Theodore, 53, 1150, 1207  
*Drums along the Mohawk*, Walter D. Edmonds, reviewed by Clifton Fadiman, 358  
 Dunbar, Paul Laurence, 1210  
 Dunlap, William, 716, 717  
 Dunne, Finley Peter, 1130; selection, 1130  
  
*Each and All*, Ralph Waldo Emerson, 477  
 Edmonds, Walter D., 358, 1209; review of book by, 358  
 Edwards, Jonathan, 853-54, 856; sermon, 856  
 Eggleston, Edward, 50  
*El Dorado*, Edgar Allen Poe, 548  
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 275, 474, 941-44; essays, 276-83; poems, 474-78  
 Enjoying the Full Significance of Fantasy, 829  
 Enjoying Vivid Imagery in Description, 831  
 Entering into Lives with Background Different from Your Own, 528  
  
 Erskine, John, 1194; selection, 1194  
*Escape*, Elinor Wylie, 669  
 Essay: Reading List, 364; Section, 251  
*Essays, Selections from*, Ralph Waldo Emerson, 280  
 Estimating the Qualities that Make for Success or Failure, 827  
*Eternal Goodness, The*, John Greenleaf Whittier, 488  
*Evening Song*, Sidney Lanier, 584  
 Exploring the Field that Poetry Has All to Itself, 831  
  
*Fable for Critics, A*, James Russell Lowell, 519  
*Fabulous New Orleans*, Lyle Saxon, 991  
 Fadiman, Clifton, book review, 358  
*Farewell Address*, George Washington, selections from, 923  
*Farewell to the Army of Northern Virginia*, Robert E. Lee, 1058  
*Father and His Hard-Rocking Ship*, Clarence Day, 261  
 Faulkner, William, 1208  
*Federalist, The*, Alexander Hamilton, 898  
*Fence, A*, Carl Sandburg, 642  
 Ferber, Edna, 717, 1208  
*Few Words about Adventures, A*, 833  
 Fiction: the Development of, in America, 46; Section, 7  
 Field, Eugene, 596, 1146; poems, 596-98  
 Figures of Speech, 713  
 Finch, Francis M., 1031  
*First Impressions of the Promised Land*, Mary Antin, 1113  
 Fitch, Clyde, 720  
 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, 1207  
*Flight*, John Steinbeck, 207  
*Folk Tune*, Dorothy Parker, 707  
*Fool's Prayer, The*, Edward Rowland Sill, 587  
*Footfalls*, Wilbur Daniel Steele, 159  
*Forbearance*, Ralph Waldo Emerson, 476  
 For Your Vocabulary, 25, 45, 71, 85, 92, 103, 113, 138, 158, 178, 206, 274, 293, 303, 312, 322, 343, 357, 382, 401, 410, 418, 437, 473, 506, 609, 614, 662, 747, 859, 909, 916, 923, 927, 988, 1038, 1057, 1083, 1129, 1164, 1169, 1173, 1188, 1203  
 Franklin, Benjamin, 360, 877-78, 895;

- selection from Autobiography, 878,  
 Savings of Poor Richard, 888  
 Freddy the rat perishes, Don Marquis,  
 701  
 Freeman Marv E Wilkins, 52, 1210  
 Freneau, Philip, 934  
 Frill, The, Pearl S Buck, 179  
 From the Forecastle, Richard Henry  
 Dana, Jr., 1017  
 Frost Robert, 455, 620, 1211, poems,  
 621-31  
 Fuller Margaret, 946  
  
 Garland Hamlin, 411, 1147-48, se-  
 lection, 411  
 General William Booth Enters into  
 Heaven, Vachel Lindsay, 654  
 George Gray, Edgar Lee Masters, 635  
 Gettysburg Address, The, Abraham  
 Lincoln, 1052  
 Giants in the Earth, Ole E Rolvaag  
 selection from, 1088  
 Gifts, Ralph Waldo Emerson, 276  
 Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun,  
 Walt Whitman, 563  
 Godfrey, Thomas, 716  
 Grad Henry Woodfin, 1061, speech,  
 1061  
 Grass, Carl Sandburg, 641  
 Green Paul, 723  
 Green Fire, Bliss Carman, 599  
 Growth and Change, 1070  
 Growth of the American Spirit, The,  
 833  
 Guide to Drama, 723  
 Guide to the Novel, 246  
 Guide to Short Stories, 55  
 Guide to the Study of Poetry, 463  
 Guiterman, Arthur, 701, poem, 701  
  
 Hale Edward Everett, 49  
 Halliburton, Richard, 932  
 Hall of Man, The, Malvina Hoffman,  
 429  
 Hamilton, Alexander, 898-99, selec-  
 tion, 920  
 Harris Joel Chandler, 114, story, 114  
 Harte, Bret, 50, 103-04, 695, 1144,  
 story, 104, poem, 695  
 Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 47, 48, 72, 851,  
 946, story, 72  
 Hayne Paul Hamilton, 577, poems,  
 577-80  
 Hearn Lafcadio, 1111, editorial, 1111  
 Height of the Ridiculous, The, Oliver  
 Wendell Holmes, 513  
  
 Hemingway, Ernest, 53, 1207  
 Henry, O (William Sydney Porter),  
 52-53, 117, 1147, story, 118  
 Henry, Patrick, 895, 905, speech, 905  
 Henry the Great, Booth Tarkington, 8  
 Heraldry of the Range, The, J Frank  
 Dobie, 313  
 Herne James A., 719  
 Hertzler, Dr Arthur E., 438, selec-  
 tion, 439  
 History of the Dividing Line, A, Colo-  
 nel William Byrd 871  
 Hoffman, Malvina, 428, selection, 429  
 Holmes, Oliver Wendell, 294, 507, 951-  
 52, essay, 294, poems, 507-15  
 Hopkinson, Francis, 897, 917, poem,  
 917  
 Horse and Buggy Doctor, The, Dr  
 Arthur E Hertzler, selection from,  
 439  
 House on the Hill, The, Edwin Ar-  
 lington Robinson, 612  
 Houston, Sam, 383, selection about,  
 384  
 Hovey, Richard, 600, 1146, poems,  
 601-02  
 How Happy Is the Little Stone, Emily  
 Dickinson, 571  
 How the Feud Started, Arthur Guiter-  
 man, 701  
 How to Tell a Man or Poet from a  
 Minor Poet, C B White, 344  
 Howard, Bronson, 719  
 Howard, Sidney, 721-22  
 Howe, Julia Ward 1030, 1210  
 Howells, William Dean, 51-52, 1139-41  
 Hughes Langston 1210  
 Hymn to the Night, Henry Wadsworth  
 Longfellow, 493  
  
 I Become a Reporter, Lincoln Steffens,  
 419  
 Ichabod, John Greenleaf Whittier, 481  
 If Still Your Orchards Bear, Edna St  
 Vincent Millay, 676  
 "If We Take Off at Night,"  
 Anne Morrow Lindbergh, 349  
 I Have a Rendezvous with Death,  
 Alan Seeger, 1159  
 I Hear America Singing, Walt Whit-  
 man, 553  
 Imagists, 461, 615  
 I'm Nobody, Emily Dickinson, 569  
 Increasing Your Pleasure in Simple  
 Things, 828  
 Indian Folk Literature, selections, 989

- I Never Saw a Moor*, Emily Dickinson, 571
- In the Churchyard at Tarrytown*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 496
- Invent Your Own Career*, John Erskine, 1194
- Irving, Washington, 46-47, 59-60, 718, 844, 936-37, 969; story, 60; essays, 267, 269
- It is a Strange Thing — to be an American*, Archibald MacLeish, 692
- James, Henry, 51-52, 1141-42
- James, Marquis, 383; selection, 384
- Jedediah Smith Explores the Far West*, Maurice S. Sullivan, 999
- Jeffers, Robinson, 462, 688; poems, 688-90
- Jefferson, Thomas, 898; selections, 914, 927
- Jewett, Sarah Orne, 50
- John Collier's Race for Life*, Stanley Vestal, 972
- John Horace Burleson*, Edgar Lee Masters, 634
- Johnson, James Weldon, 662, 1210; poem, 663
- Journal*, Sarah Kemble Knight, selections from, 865
- Journals and Diaries, 860
- Joy*, Robinson Jeffers, 688
- Kaufman, George, 722
- Kelly, George, 721-22
- Knight, Sarah Kemble, 861, 865: selection, 865
- Komroff, Manuel, 54
- Krey, Laura, 1208
- Lady, A*, Amy Lowell, 615
- La Farge, Oliver, 1208
- Lament*, Edna St. Vincent Millay, 673
- Lamp, The*, Sara Teasdale, 666
- Lanier, Sidney, 581, 962; poems, 581-86
- Last Leaf, The*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, 510
- Late Frontier, *The*, 1071
- League for Peace, A*, Woodrow Wilson, 1160
- Leaves*, Sara Teasdale, 667
- Lee in Defeat*, Thomas Nelson Page, 398
- Lee, Robert E., selection about, 398; selection by, 1058
- Let My People Go!* Negro spiritual, 1033
- Letter to General Joseph Hooker*, Abraham Lincoln, 1040
- Lewis, Sinclair, 53, 139, 1207, 1210; story, 140
- Life on the Mississippi*, Samuel L. Clemens, selection from, 1011
- Light Verse, 694
- Lightning Pilot, A*, Samuel L. Clemens, 1011
- Limitations of Youth, The*, Eugene Field, 597
- Lincoln, Abraham, 1031, 1039; selections by, 1039-43; selections about, 607, 634, 650, 1043
- Lincoln, the Man of the People*, Edwin Markham, 607
- Lindbergh, Anne Morrow, 348; essay, 349
- Lindbergh, Charles, 348
- Lindsay, Vachel, 461, 649, 1211; poems, 650-61
- Lippmann, Walter, 1169; selection, 1169
- Little Boy Blue*, Eugene Field, 596
- Little Old Sod Shanty, The*, pioneer ballad, 1086
- Little While I Fain Would Linger Yet, A*, Paul Hamilton Hayne, 579
- Local Color, 50, 1144-45
- London, Jack, 53, 124, 1149; story, 124
- Long Feud*, Louis Untermeyer, 678
- Long Hill, The*, Sara Teasdale, 667
- Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 492, 950-51; poems, 493-505
- Lowell, Amy, 461, 614, 1211; poems, 615-19
- Lowell, James Russell, 517, 952; poems, 517-34
- Lucinda Matlock*, Edgar Lee Masters, 635
- Lumberjack Literature, 1071; selection, 1098
- MacKaye, Steel, 719
- MacLeish, Archibald, 462, 690, 1213; poems, 691-92
- Magazine in America, *The*, 353
- Magazines Are Human*, Henry S. Canby, 354
- Man with a Tractor, The*, Morrow Mayo, 1183
- Man with the Hoe, The*, Edwin Markham, 604

- Mannahatta*, Walt Whitman, 553  
 Map: American Fiction, end papers  
*Mark Twain's Autobiography*, selection from, 403  
 Markham, Edwin, 604, 1149; poems, 604-08  
 Marquis, Don, 702; poem, 703  
*Mary Lou Wingate*, Stephen Vincent Benét, 680  
*Mary White*, William Allen White, 299  
 Masters, Edgar Lee, 461, 633, 1211; poems, 634-38  
 Mather, Cotton, 852  
 Mather, Increase, 852  
 Mather, Richard, 852  
 Mayo, Morrow, 1183; selection, 1183  
 Melville, Herman, 49, 947  
*Mending Wall*, Robert Frost, 624  
 Metrical Terms, 711  
 Middle West, poetry of, 460  
*Midwestern Primitive*, Ruth Suckow, 190  
 Milburn, George, 54  
 Millay, Edna St. Vincent, 462, 673; poems, 673-76  
 Miller, Joaquin, 589, 1146; poems, 590-92  
*Minister's Black Veil, The*, Nathaniel Hawthorne, 72  
*Miniver Cheevy*, Edwin Arlington Robinson, 610  
*Minor Bird, A*, Robert Frost, 626  
*Miracles*, Walt Whitman, 567  
 Mitchell, Margaret, 1208  
*Mockingbird, The*, Paul Hamilton Hayne, 577  
 Modern Problems, 1156  
 Moody, William Vaughn, 720-21  
 Morley, Christopher, 323; essay, 323  
 Morton, Thomas, 852  
*Most Dangerous Game, The*, Richard Connell, 26  
 Motley, John Lothrop, 953  
*Mountain Whippoorwill, The*, Stephen Vincent Benét, 683  
*Mr. Dooley on Machinery*, Finley Peter Dunne, 1130  
*Mrs. George Reece*, Edgar Lee Masters, 635  
 Murfree, Mary N. ("Charles Egbert Craddock"), 1145  
*Music*, Amy Lowell, 616  
*My America*, Louis Adamic, review of, 362; selections from, 1165  
*My Aunt*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, 508  
*My Fiddle*, James Whitcomb Riley, 594  
*My Life Closed Twice*, Emily Dickinson, 572  
*My Lost Youth*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 496  
 Nash, Ogden, 707; poem, 707  
 Negro in Literature, The, 1027-28  
 Negro Literature, 114, 1028, 1033-36  
 Neihardt, John, 710  
 New England Primer, 851; selection from, 855  
 New Nation, A, 891  
*New South, The*, Henry Woodfin Grady, 1061  
*Night Song at Amalfi*, Sara Teasdale, 666  
*Night Stuff*, Carl Sandburg, 644  
*Nobody Knows De Trouble I See*, Negro spiritual, 1035  
*Nocturne*, Archibald MacLeish, 691  
*Noiseless Patient Spider, A*, Walt Whitman, 566  
*Nonsense Rhyme*, Elinor Wylie, 670  
 Norris, Frank, 1120, 1149; selection, 1120  
 Northern Poets, 467  
 Novel, The, 246; Guide to, 246; Reading List, 247  
*Octopus, The*, Frank Norris, selection from, 1120  
*Ode*, Henry Timrod, 576  
 Odell, Jonathan, 895  
 Odets, Clifford, 722, 1211  
*Ogillallah, Village, The*, Francis Parkman, 980  
*Old Ironsides*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, 507  
 O'Neill, Eugene, 721, 728; play, 729  
*On Conversation*, Oliver Wendell Holmes, 294  
*On the Building of Springfield*, Vachel Lindsay, 651  
*One Perfect Rose*, Dorothy Parker, 706  
*Opportunity*, Edward Rowland Sill, 589  
*Oregon Trail, The*, Francis Parkman, selection from, 980  
*Original Pocahontas Story, The*, Captain John Smith, 845  
 Otis, James, 895  
 Our Timetable, 839-40  
*Our Town*, Thornton Wilder, 748

- Outcasts of Poker Flat, The*, Bret Harte, 103
- Page, Thomas Nelson, 50, 397; selection, 398
- Paine, Thomas, 895-96; selection, 909
- Paradox of Poverty and Plenty, The*, Walter Lippmann, 1169
- Parker, Dorothy, 706; poems, 706-07
- Parkman, Francis, 953-54, 969; selection, 980
- Pasture, The*, Robert Frost, 621
- Patterns*, Amy Lowell, 616
- Paul Bunyan, selection about, 1098
- Payne, John Howard, 717
- People, Yes, The*, Carl Sandburg, 644
- Peterkin, Julia, 1208
- Plain Language from Truthful James*, Bret Harte, 695
- Poe, Edgar Allan, 47, 48-49, 85, 458, 536, 954-56; story, 86; poems, 537-49
- Poetry: in America, 457; Reading Lists, 693, 709; Section, 455
- Pony Express, The*, Arthur Vernon, 1073
- Poor Richard's Almanac*, Benjamin Franklin, selections from, 888
- Porter, William Sydney. *See* Henry, O.
- Prairie Doom*, Ole E. Rølvaag, 1088
- Prayer*, Louis Untermeyer, 679
- Prayers of Steel*, Carl Sandburg, 644
- Prescott, William H., 953
- Pretty Words*, Elinor Wylie, 672
- Proem*, John Greenleaf Whittier, 480
- Project of Arriving at Moral Perfection*, Benjamin Franklin, 879
- Psalm I*, from *The Bay Psalm Book*, 854
- Puritans, 843. 850-54; literature of, 854-59
- Purse Seine, The*, Robinson Jeffers, 689
- Quatrains*, Edwin Markham, 606
- Raven, The*, Edgar Allan Poe, 540
- Rawlings, Marjorie Kinnan, 1208
- Reading Lists: Advancing Frontier, 1025; Biography, 451; Drama, 821; Essay, 364; General References, 1216; Growth and Change, 1134; In This Volume, 964, 1151, 1214; Light Verse, 709; Novels, 247; Poetry, 693; Short Stories, 242; Some Earlier Excursions Recalled, 5; Some Famous Poems of the Nineteenth Century, 603
- Realism, Rise of, 1135; meaning of, 1136
- Revolution, Revolutionary War. *See* American Revolution
- Rhodora, The*, Ralph Waldo Emerson, 475
- Rice, Elmer, 722
- Richard Cory*, Edwin Arlington Robinson, 611
- Riley, James Whitcomb, 593, 1146; poems, 593-95
- Ring Around a Rosy*, Sinclair Lewis, 140
- Rise of Industry, *The*, 1106
- Rise of Realism, *The*, 1135
- Ritchie, Mrs. Anna Cora Mowatt, 718
- Roar of a Great City, The*, Lafcadio Hearn, 1111
- Roberts, Kenneth, 1209
- Robinson, Edwin Arlington, 455, 461, 609, 1211; poems, 610-13
- Rogers, Will, 717
- Rølvaag, Ole E., 50, 1088, 1208; selection, 1088
- Romanticism, Romanticists, the Romantic Movement, 932-36, 1150
- Ryan, Abram J., 1059; poem, 1059
- Sam Houston at San Jacinto*, Marquis James, 384
- Samuel Sewall's Diary*, selections from, 862
- Sandburg, Carl, 455, 461, 639, 1039, 1044, 1211; poems, 640-48; history selections, 1039, 1043
- Santa Fe Trail, The*, Vachel Lindsay, 656
- Sarah Kemble Knight's Journal*, selections from, 865
- Saroyan, William, 54, 723
- Saxon, Lyle, 991; selections, 991, 1173
- Sayings of Poor Richard*, Benjamin Franklin, 888
- School Life*, Hamlin Garland, 411
- Scouting for a Landing in New England*, William Bradford, 847
- Sea Gypsy, The*, Richard Hovey, 601
- Sea Lullaby*, Elinor Wylie, 670
- Second Inaugural Address*, Abraham Lincoln, 1041
- Seeger, Alan, 1159; poem, 1159
- Sewall, Samuel, 861, 862; selection, 862

- Having the Excitement of Great Struggles, 827  
 Having Good Talk about Books and Writers, 830  
*Sharpened Leg, The*, Cheyenne legend, 989  
 Sharpening Your Sense of Humor, 830  
 Sheldon, Edward, 721  
 Sherwood, Robert, 722  
*Short History of American Drama, A*, 715  
 Short Story Reading List, 242, Section, 8  
*Silence*, Edgar Lee Masters, 636  
 Sill, Edward Rowland, 587, 1145, 1146, poems, 587-89  
 Simms William Gilmore, 47, 961  
 Sinclair, Upton, 1150, 1207  
*Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, Jonathan Edwards, 856  
*Sixteen*, Maureen Daly, 238  
*Sketch Book, The*, Washington Irving, selections from, 266  
*Skipper Heson's Ride*, John Greenleaf Whittier 483  
 Smith Jedediah, 970, selection about, 999  
 Smith, Captain John, 46, 835, 836, 845, selection, 845  
 Some Earlier Excursions Recalled, 5  
 Some Famous Poems of the Nineteenth Century, 603  
*Some Keep the Sabbath*, Emily Dickinson, 571  
*Son of the Middle Border, A*, Hamlin Garland, selection from, 411  
*Song of Myself*, Walt Whitman, 554  
*Song of the Chattahoochee*, Sidney Lamer, 581  
*Song of the Horse*, Navajo Indian song, 989  
 Songs and Ballads of the Revolution, 896, selection, 917  
 Sothern E H, 371  
*Soul Selects Her Own Society, The*, Emily Dickinson, 572  
 Southern Poets, 574  
 Spanish American War, 1108  
*Speech in Defense of the Constitution*, Alexander Hamilton 920  
*Speech in the Virginia Convention*, Patrick Henry 905  
*Split Cherry Tree*, Jesse Stuart, 225  
*Sporting Life in America During*, Robert C Benchley, 255  
*Spring and the Fall, The*, Edna St Vincent Millay, 674  
 Steele, Wilbur Daniel, 159, story, 159  
 Steffens, Lincoln 419, selection, 419  
*Stein Song, A*, Richard Hovey, 601  
 Steinbeck, John, 53, 207, 1211, story, 207  
 Stevens, James, 1098, selection, 1098  
*Sturup Cup, The*, Sidney Lanier, 585  
 Stockton, Francis R, 51, 1146  
*Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening*, Robert Frost, 623  
 Stowe, Harriet Beecher, 49, 719, 1027, 1210  
 Strachey, William, 844-45  
*Struggle for Life, A*, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, 93  
 Stuart, Jesse, 54, 224, story, 225  
 Suckow, Ruth, 53, 190, story, 190  
 Sullivan, Maurice S, 999, selection, 999  
*Talk with Youth, A*, William Allen White, 1198  
*Tampa Robins*, Sidney Lanier, 584  
 Tarkington Booth, 8, 1150, story, 8  
 Teasdale, Sara, 462, 666, poems, 666-68  
 Test of the Union, The, 1076  
*Textiles*, Sherwood Anderson, 805  
*Thanatopsis*, William Cullen Bryant, 467  
 Thoreau, Henry Davis, 285, 944-45, selection, 286  
*Those Two Boys*, Franklin P Adams, 705  
 Three Original Geniuses, 536  
*Tide Rises, the Tide Falls, The*, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 503  
 Time Charts Colonial, 860, New Nation, 894, Advancing Frontier, 971, Test of the Union, 1032, Growth and Change, 1109, Rise of Realism, 1138, Contemporary Writers, 1206  
 Timrod, Henry, 573, 961, poems, 574-76  
*To a Telegraph Pole*, Louis Untermeyer, 678  
*To a Waterfowl*, William Cullen Bryant, 469  
*To Build a Fire*, Jack London, 124  
*To Helen*, Edgar Allan Poe, 537  
*To Make a Prairie*, Emily Dickinson, 570  
 Transcendentalism, Transcendentalists 941-46

- Transition Poets, 587  
 Twain, Mark (Samuel Langhorne Clemens) 50, 402, 1142-43; selections, 403, 1011  
 Twentieth Century Poets, 461, 1211; poems by, 604  
*Two 'Merica Men*, Thomas Augustine Daly, 1118  
*Two Years before the Mast*, Richard Henry Dana, Jr., selection from, 1017  
 Tyler, Royall, 716  
 Types of Poetry, 710  
  
*Ulalume*, Edgar Allan Poe, 544  
*Unanswered by Request*, Ogden Nash, 707  
 Understanding Another Person's Point of View on Life, 826  
 Untermeyer, Louis, 677, 1212; poems, 678-79  
  
*Vagabond Song*, A, Bliss Carman, 599  
 Van Doren, Carl, 252, 360; review of book by, 360  
*Velvet Shoes*, Elinor Wylie, 671  
 Vernon, Arthur, 1073; selection, 1073  
 Vestal, Stanley, 972; selection, 972  
*Vision of Sir Launfal*, The, James Russell Lowell, 524  
*Voluntaries III*, Ralph Waldo Emerson, 476  
*Voyage*, The, Washington Irving, 269  
  
 Walden, Henry David Thoreau, selection from, 286  
 Wallace, General Lew, 1150  
*Walter Reed*, Paul de Kruif, 328  
 War between the States, 459, 1026-33; selections about, 398, 481, 561, 574, 576, 607, 634, 680, 1040-61  
 Ward, Artemus, 970; selection, 1023  
 Washington, George, 899, 923; selection, 923; selection about, 927  
*Washington's Farewell Address*. See *Farewell Address*.  
  
 Webster, Daniel, 1029; selection about, 481  
 Wells, Carolyn, 698; parodies, 699-700  
*We Never Know How High*, Emily Dickinson, 573  
 Werner, M. R., selection, 372  
*Westward Ho!* Joaquin Miller, 591  
 Wharton, Edith, 1207, 1210  
*What Is an American?* Jean de Crèvecoeur, 900  
*When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer*, Walt Whitman, 566  
*When the Frost Is on the Punkin*, James Whitcomb Riley, 593  
*Where the Cross Is Made*, Eugene O'Neill, 729  
*Whirligig of Life*, The, O. Henry, 118  
 White, E. B., 343; essay, 344  
 White, William Allen, 299; essay, 299; book review, 362; radio talk, 1198  
 Whitman, Walt, 458-59, 551-52, 956-59; poems, 553-68  
 Whittier, John Greenleaf, 479, 940-41, 1028; poems, 480-91  
 Widening Your Knowledge and Understanding of Human Nature, 885  
 Wigglesworth, Michael, 851  
 Wilder, Thornton, 723, 747; play, 748  
 Williams, Roger, 853  
 Wilson, Woodrow, 1154, 1160; selection, 1160  
*Wind Song*, Carl Sandburg, 643  
 Winthrop, John, 851  
 Wister, Owen, 50  
 Wolfe, Thomas, 1208  
*Word*, A, Emily Dickinson, 570  
 World War, 53, 1153-54; selections about, 641, 650, 1159-64  
 World War and Modern Problems, 1153  
 Wright, Richard, 1210  
 Wylie, Elinor, 669; poems, 669-72  
  
 Yankee, The, 876  
 Young, Stark, 1208







